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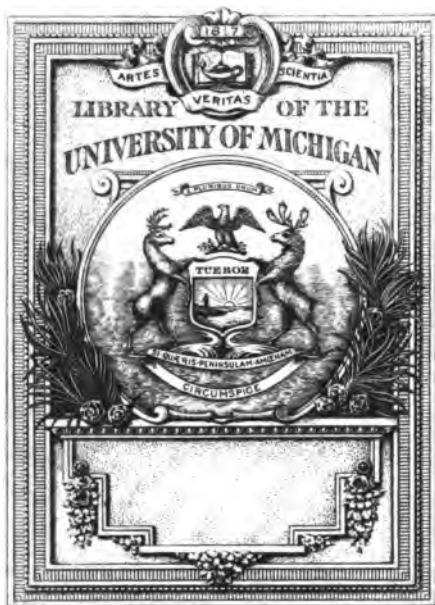
BY

BOOTH TARKINGTON

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SAMUEL FRENCH, 25 West 45th St., New York



BEQUEST OF
DANIEL L. QUIRK, JR.



116
CLARENCE

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

By
BOOTH TARKINGTON

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The following is a copy of the play-bill of the first performance of "CLARENCE."

HUDSON THEATRE, NEW YORK, September 20th, 1919

BOOTH TARKINGTON'S

NEW COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

"CLARENCE"

(Direction of George C. Tyler)

Staged by Frederick Stanhope

THE PLAYERS

(In the order of their appearance)

MRS. MARTYN	.....	<i>Susanne Westford</i>
MR. WHEELER	.....	<i>John Flood</i>
MRS. WHEELER	.....	<i>Mary Boland</i>
BOBBY WHEELER	.....	<i>Glenn Hunter</i>
CORA WHEELER	.....	<i>Helen Hayes</i>
VIOLET PINNEY	.....	<i>Elsie Mackay</i>
CLARENCE	.....	<i>Alfred Lunt</i>
DELLA	.....	<i>Rea Martin</i>
DINWIDDIE	.....	<i>Barlowe Borland</i>
HUBERT STEM	.....	<i>Willard Barton</i>

THE SCENES

ACT I.—The anteroom to Mr. Wheeler's private office, New York.

ACT II.—Living room of Mr. Wheeler's home. Englewood, N. J.

ACT III.—The same. That evening.

ACT IV.—The same. Next morning.

CLARENCE

ACT I

SCENE.—*The time is any day, now-a-days. A room in the President's suite of offices of an impressive financial Institution, on the top floor of the Institution's building in Nassau Street, New York. This is not a business play; but the details follow actuality. There are no maps on the walls, no signs on the doors, no papers on the table, there is no token of business, or of any other form of activity. There is almost nothing in the room, which is in two shades of brown—a "dull-finish" wood paneling up to seven or eight feet on all four walls, and above that a "dull-finish" plaster. The back wall is broken by a door c., the R. wall has a fireplace c., and a mantel of brown wood, in type with the paneling, with a clock upon it. There is a second door; it is in the R. wall c.*

Against the back wall are two high-backed settles, or upholstered benches with backs, one up R. the other up L., flanking the door c.; and another such settle is placed at right angles with the R. wall, and just up of the fireplace R.C. Another settle is placed at right angles to this one, and facing the fire, forming an L shape nook. These settles are uniformly upholstered in dull green stuff. There is a chair, similarly upholstered, near the fireplace, down R. there is a

chair at a small table up L. The table is of dull wood; plain and expensive—with nothing on it. Another chair, similar L.C. A fire burns in the fireplace, but no coal-hod or fire-irons are seen. When this fire is tended, a person in uniform brings the implements with him and takes them away with him when he goes. (As such a person, however, will not be shown in the play, the matter could be explained to the critics between the acts, in the lobby of the theatre.)

No one is seen for a moment or two. Then there is the sound of a distant buzzer. A moment or two after this, MRS. MARTYN enters up L. She is a "distinguished looking," intelligent woman of middle-age, very quietly dressed in black, not a new dress; she wears glasses. She has no hat, and her air is that of a person at home. She goes directly to the chair at the table up R. and sits, letting her hands rest in her lap, her manner patiently expectant, as by a familiar routine.

Several moments elapse; then WHEELER enters C. He is in later middle age, a thoughtful man-of-affairs—large affairs. His hair is still plentiful, but not wavy, though there is a somewhat careless front lock that curves down enough for a cartoonist to seize in a caricature. He is healthy-looking and robust, but his head and shoulders stoop a little. He wears glasses; his "sack" suit is of dark, rough material; his collar is winged in front, his tie is dark with a figure, or a diagonal stripe. He does not wear a white false collar with his waistcoat. He has a short mustache, of course, and is preoccupied. He comes in neither briskly nor languidly, and goes to the fire; where, not stooping, he warms his hands, and chafes the palm of each with its own fingers. He greets MRS. MARTYN as he is

crossing from the door to the fire. This is a daily program and there is no liveliness about it.

WHEELER. Good morning, Mrs. Martyn.

MRS. MARTYN. (*Placidly*) Howd'ya-do, Mr. Wheeler. (*Then, as he warms his hands, WHEELER goes R.*) I suppose it must be cold, motoring in from the country these mornings.

WHEELER. (*With preoccupied geniality*) No; there's a heater in the car. It's just habit for a man to go to a fireplace.

MRS. MARTYN. I hope Mrs. Wheeler's cold is better.

WHEELER. (*At fireplace R., faintly surprised, absently*) I don't think my wife has a cold. (*Frowns a little*)

MRS. MARTYN. (*Explaining*) The other day when she came to take you out to lunch I got the impression she said she wasn't very well.

WHEELER. (*Thoughtfully, with a very slight note of annoyance*) Oh, she's well enough, I think. May have been disturbed about something. (*As he speaks he has crossed to C.*) Have I appointments with any of those people waiting? (*Crosses to door L.*)

MRS. MARTYN. No; I haven't made any appointments at all for you this morning. At one o'clock you go to Mr. Milly's lunch for the Secretary of the Interior; you have a directors' meeting at three—the Unity—and the Pitch Pine consultation at three-thirty. (*She does not consult a notebook, nor display a pencil or fountain pen.*) Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Vance will do for all the people in the ante-room. (*She seems to stop; he turns to exit L. Then, with a faint frown and half-smile, she adds*) Except one, perhaps.

WHEELER. Who's that?

MRS. MARTYN. (*Beginning*) It's a soldier who

WHEELER. In a private's uniform—rather a sickly-looking fellow?

MRS. MARTYN. Yes.

WHEELER. I noticed him waiting out there yesterday too.

MRS. MARTYN. They sent him to Mr. Vance, but he wouldn't tell what he wanted; said he had to see you. Of course Mr. Vance told him that was impossible; he didn't even have a letter of introduction.

WHEELER. (*Briefly, carelessly*) Oh, well, he's a soldier; see what he wants. (*Turns to go*)

MRS. MARTYN. Very well. (*WHEELER starts to go out L., abruptly thinks better of it and halts.*)

WHEELER. (*Frowning*) Oh—uh— (*Hesitates momentarily*) It's possible my daughter and her governess, Miss Pinney, will come in town this morning to see me. Miss Pinney spoke to me just as I was leaving the house, and I understood her to say—I'm not just sure I caught her meaning— (*His manner is the least bit confused; MRS. MARTYN looks surprised. He continues*) She spoke in a low voice, for some reason . . .

MRS. MARTYN. Your daughter did?

WHEELER. (*Very slightly uncomfortable*) No, my daughter's governess—uh—Miss Pinney. I understood her to say that she wanted to see me in private. . . . I think she meant she wanted to talk with me about my daughter.

MRS. MARTYN. I understand.

WHEELER. I think she implied that she and my daughter might come in town and turn up here at the office . . . (*Leaves this tentative.*)

MRS. MARTYN. I'll look out for them.

WHEELER. Thanks. (*Exits L.*)

(*MRS. MARTYN sits looking thoughtfully after him, for a moment or two, then rises and moves*

toward the door up L. Just before she reaches it, it is rather impetuously thrown open and MRS. WHEELER enters in a state of controlled excitement. She is a pretty young woman, WHEELER'S second wife . . . wearing a fashionable dark "street dress" and hat, with a veil and fur coat. MRS. MARTYN utters an exclamation of surprise at sight of her.)

MRS. MARTYN. Why, Mrs. Wheeler— (Moves as if to go to door L.)

MRS. WHEELER. (At door c., checking her quickly) Good morning, Mrs. Martyn. Don't disturb my husband, please. How long has he been here?

MRS. MARTYN. He just came.

MRS. WHEELER. Has Bobby been here?

MRS. MARTYN. (Puzzled) No. I thought he was away at school.

MRS. WHEELER. (With a slight grimness) He's been home for several days, and he's not going back—at least not to that school.

MRS. MARTYN. Mr. Wheeler hasn't mentioned

MRS. WHEELER. (With a strained smile) Mr. Wheeler didn't mention that he was expecting any of us here this morning?

MRS. MARTYN. I'm sure your coming in town so soon after he did will be a surprise to him, Mrs. Wheeler. Won't you let me . . .

MRS. WHEELER. (Quickly) No. Not now. I really don't want to disturb him, especially as he's probably just got to concentrating on his work. (Turning to door up c.) I'm going to run along and do some things I came in town for. (Turning with her hand on the knob of the door up c. and speaking with an anxiety she seeks to veil) I don't suppose he's expecting any of the rest of the family? (Pauses an instant. MRS. MARTYN follows MRS.

WHEELER *up c.*) Not my daughter—or—her governess—Miss Pinney?

MRS. MARTYN. (*Beginning impulsively*) Why — (*Checks herself, then moves toward r.*) Won't you let me ask him, Mrs. Wheeler? I'm sure he'd want to . . .

MRS. WHEELER. (*Quickly*) Oh, please don't— (*Comes down.*) It's one of the things I pride myself on in being the wife of an important man; I don't interfere with his work! (*Goes up*) Please don't mention my . . . my dropping in. I just thought maybe I'd find Bobby here. (*Nods, then exits c. A moment later, the door l. opens and WHEELER appears there, his expression rather disturbed.*)

MRS. MARTYN. Very well, Mrs. Wheeler. (*Closes door.*)

WHEELER. Was that my wife here?

MRS. MARTYN. Yes; she . . .

WHEELER. I *thought* I heard her voice.

MRS. M. She wouldn't let me disturb you. She wanted to know if your son had been here.

WHEELER. (*Reflectively*) So! Ask Mr. Lindsey to telephone. I shall not be able to attend the luncheon party for the Secretary of the Interior.

MRS. M. Very well.

(WHEELER *retires, closing the door l.* MRS. MARTYN *turns toward door up c., when it is again somewhat impetuously thrown open and another member of the WHEELER family appears, also under the influence of excitement. He is hovering on the elder side of sixteen; his hair is to the mode of New York, according to the interpretation of his years, and so is his costume, which includes an overcoat. He also wears a pair of pale spats, too large for his shoes—he is*

strongly conscious of them at times, and also of a large hook-handled cane, too long for him. He removes his hat at sight of MRS. MARTYN. At all times he is deathly serious; and speaks quickly; when he doesn't stammer. This is BOBBY.)

BOBBY. (*Hastily as he enters*) Howd'y'do. Listen. Look, Mrs. Martyn, have any the fam'ly been here yet?

MRS. MARTYN. Is it Bobby? Bobby Wheeler?

BOBBY. (*Coming down*) Yes'm, I'm Robert.
I . . .

BOBBY. Didn't you know me?

MRS. M. You grow so fast! The last time I saw you you'd just got your *first* long trousers.

BOBBY. Well, I do grow a bit; but my first long trousers were practically a life-time ago.

MRS. M. Yes. A couple of years at *least*!

BOBBY. Listen! I'm glad you're still here, Mrs. Martyn, after all these years.

MRS. M. Oh, yes; I *have* been here practically a life-time. By the way, your mother was just here. Didn't you meet her as she went out?

BOBBY. (*Hastily*) No, I didn't. I guess she came in her limousine. I came in on the ten-eleven. *They* were comin' in the tourin'-car. Listen. What *I* want to find out; have they been here yet?

MRS. M. Who?

BOBBY. Why, my sister Cora and— (*Suddenly gulps*) . . . look! I mean my sister Cora and . . . (*Gulps again*) . . . and Violent. I don't mean Violent . . . (*Hurrying on in helpless confusion, but with abysmal gravity*) Listen! I mean her and Cora. Look! I mean Cora and Miss Pinney. Miss Pinney. Cora's governess, Miss Pinney. Pinney.

MRS. M. (*Shaking her head wondering*) No, they haven't been here.

BOBBY. Well, they'll be here pretty soon then. I don't want my father to know I'm here if it's convenient. (*Crosses to R. Goes to the fireplace. MRS. M. sits up R.*) We haven't got along too well lately and besides I took his spats. Look, do you suppose he'll care? He's never had 'em on; I don't think he likes to wear 'em. It's right, isn't it? I mean you don't haf to be very old to wear spats, do you?

MRS. M. (*Gravely*) Oh, I don't think so.

BOBBY. (*With added earnestness*) Look; they haven't gone out in New York, have they? I been away at school for practick'ly a lifetime; and I haven't had a good chance yet to see what they're wearing.

MRS. M. I didn't know you were interested in "what they're wearing." The last time I saw you . . .

BOBBY. Well, I said that was about a lifetime ago! Look; I used to go around like a scarecrow, but you can't do that all the time because, look; why, how do you look if you do? Do you think it's right to carry a stick over your arm like this? (*Hooks it on his arm*) With shammy gloves? Or do you think you ought to kind of lean on it?

MRS. M. (*Gravely*) Oh, I'd lean on it.

BOBBY. (*Nervously*) Look; I think a single eye-glass may be all right, but look, I think it's kind of silly to wear one, don't you?

MRS. M. I suppose it all depends.

BOBBY. (*Fumbling nervously in his waistcoat*) Look; I guess it wouldn't be any harm to own one, would it? Another thing I was goin' to ask somebody, well, f'r instance, s'pose I found a lens that dropped out of a pair of somebody's spectacles, listen: Do you think it would damage your eyes any if you had a hole put in it for a string and kind of

practiced with it in your own room? What I mean; look, if you don't wear it all the *time* it wouldn't damage your eyes any, would it? I guess it wouldn't look too well to have it on when—well, look, what I mean . . .

(There is a tapping upon the door c., BOBBY goes R. adjusting attire, then adjusts attire generally in some agitation. Two pretty girls are revealed in the doorway. The elder, VIOLET—MISS PINNEY—the governess, is well dressed, in dark winter clothes, a hat, wrap, and veil; she is about twenty-two or twenty-three. The younger, CORA, is a piquant little beauty, a year one side or the other of her brother's age; she is gaily in the fashion, being fond of color, and is equipped to have driven to town in an open car. She speaks cheerfully, as soon as the door is opened.)

CORA. Hello, Mrs. Martyn! Oh, Violet, look! There's Bobby! *(They come in.)*

VIOLET. *(Coming down to MRS. MARTYN. Seriously, as they enter)* Mrs. Martyn, did Mr. Wheeler say . . .

MRS. M. *(Going R.)* Yes. He's expecting you, I think. *(Exits R. behind table.)*

BOBBY. *(Nervous)* Violet . . . *(Gulps.)*

CORA. *(Turning. Crossly)* What do you mean calling Miss Pinney "Violet"? You've only known her these four days since you got fired from this *last* school, and certainly . . .

BOBBY. *(Interrupting sternly)* You show a little delicacy, please! *(Crosses to VIOLET. With emotion to VIOLET, who stands looking at the door L. in serious expectancy, biting her lip)* Vio—Violent . . . Violet . . . I only ask you to show me at least this much consideration that you would certainly observe to a mere—dog!

VIOLET. (*Turning quickly*) I'm not going to speak to your father about *you* at all, Mr. Wheeler.

CORA. "Mister" Wheeler! Miss Pinney, *do* call the child "Bobby"!

BOBBY. (*Sternly to her*) Haven't you got any sense at all? (*Goes up c.* MRS. MARTYN *enters quickly L.*)

MRS. M. He will see you and Cora now, Miss Pinney.

VIOLET. I wanted to see him alone first. (*Goes over to MRS. M.*)

MRS. M. (*Nodding*) That's all right, I'm sure.

VIOLET. Thank you. (*Exits L.* MRS. MARTYN *at the same time exits up c.* CORA *goes across to the door L. and listens.*)

BOBBY. (*Sitting L.C., bitterly*) That's a woman's honor, *that is!* Eavesdropping!

CORA. (*Coming away from the door, crosses to c.*) Door's too thick to hear, anyhow. That's *papa's* stick. The idea of a child of your age—oh! (*Shouting*) *Look!* (*Pointing*) Those are *papa's spats*, too! Well, aren't you ashamed of yourself!

BOBBY. (*Haughtily*) You tend to your own petty affairs.

CORA. (*Glancing ruefully R.*) Golly! I wish they *were* petty! She's come to tell *papa* on me!

BOBBY. What about?

CORA. (*Coldly*) You 'tend to your own petty affairs.

BOBBY. Whyn't she discipline you herself?

CORA. She thinks I'm getting so dissolute something in the father-line has to be done. She'll get into a scrape, all right.

BOBBY. (*Incredulous*) *How* will she?

CORA. *Mama'll* have a fit if she finds out about her coming here to *papa's* office.

BOBBY. Why will she?

CORA. (*Cryptic, pursing her lips*) School boys needn't ask too many questions.

BOBBY. (*Sharply*) I'm not a school boy!

CORA. (*Earnestly. On table*) No; that's so! Bobby, what *did* they fire you for? Papa wouldn't tell me.

BOBBY. (*Crosses to CORA at c., loudly*) I want to know why will Miss Pinney get in a scrape.

CORA. (*Lightly*) Oh—mama thinks Miss Pinney's too young and pretty to be a governess, anyhow!

BOBBY. (*Growling, not comprehending*) What you talkin' about?

CORA. Of course *I'm* not goin' to tell mama we made this secret excursion to tell on me and discuss how my character's to be saved . . . but when she finds out . . . whoopee!

BOBBY. Why can't you even talk so a man can understand?

CORA. A "man"?

BOBBY. (*Sternly*) Never mind! (*Anxiously, comes forward*) Are you *sure* it's you and not me, they're talkin' about?

CORA. (*Not sympathetically*) Why, you aren't in any *new* trouble, are you? Not in just these few *days* since you got sent home?

BOBBY. (*Loftily, severely*) Never mind, I tell you.

CORA. (*Goes to BOBBY at c. Curiously*) Yesterday I heard you saying something to Miss Pinney about Della, that Irish housemaid at our house.

BOBBY. (*Breathing wildly*) Look here! Were you listening at the lib'ary keyhole?

CORA. No . . . at the sun-room window. What *were* you telling Miss Pinney about Della? I only heard you say something that sounded just horrible.

BOBBY. (*Fiercely*) What was it?

CORA. I heard you say something about this house-

maid, Della, and then you said "a mere passing fancy isn't the love of a lifetime," and then mama called me. What on earth did that have to do with Della? Is she the love of your lifetime?

BOBBY. (*Bitterly*) If I had a daughter like you, do you know what I'd do with her?

CORA. (*Gaily*) Feed her on sugar and spice? (*BOBBY turns and goes on to settle. Moving in a half dancing mockery*) What are little girls made of? Sugar and spice! What are little boys made of? Rats and snails! And puppy-dogs' tails! (*Curtsies and pirouettes, as he flings himself down on the settle by the fireplace, desperate with exasperation. She hums dance-music.*)

BOBBY. (*With distended nostrils*) You tend to your own petty affairs, I tell you! (*The opening of the door c. by MRS. MARTYN interrupts CORA'S continued evolutions and humming. MRS. M. doesn't quite close the door behind her, but stands tentatively prepared to open it again.*)

MRS. M. (*At c.*) Do you children mind if I see somebody for your father in here? It's a soldier that's been waiting two days to see him; he seems rather queer; and there are so many people in the anterooms it's hard to talk out there.

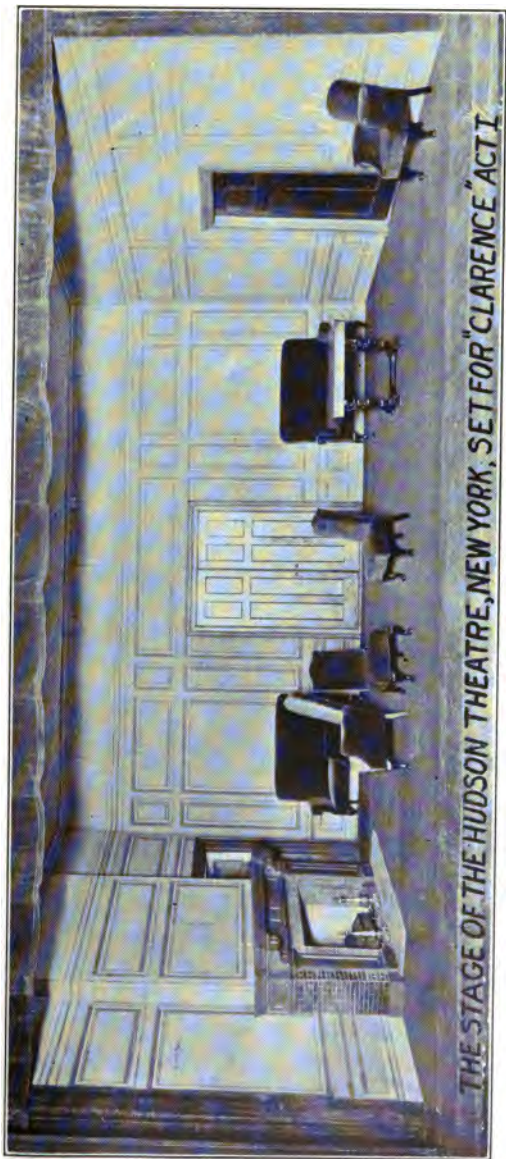
CORA. Why, this is your place for seeing people, isn't it, Mrs. Martyn?

MRS. M. (*Smiling*) Not when Mr. Wheeler's own family . . .

CORA. (*Interrupting earnestly*) Do go ahead. I want to study how you do it so I can be a woman of affairs some day.

BOBBY. (*R. CORA R.C. BOBBY, pessimistic about this*) Oh, murder!

(*CORA goes to the settle R., but kneels on it, looking over the back of it, facing L. BOBBY is on the other settle, unseen.*)



THE STAGE OF THE HUDSON THEATRE, NEW YORK, SET FOR "CLARENCE" ACT I

MRS. M. (*Opening the door and speaking to off up R.*) Step in here, please.

(THE SOLDIER *shambles in slowly, his hat in his hand. He is very sallow; his hair is in some disorder; he stoops, not only at the shoulders, but from the waist, sagging forward, and, for a time, to the left side; then, for a time, to the right; his legs "give" slightly at the knees, and he limps, somewhat vaguely. He wears the faded old shabby khaki uniform of a private of the Quartermaster's department, and this uniform was a bad misfit for him when it was new. A large pair of spectacles shield his blinking eyes; his hands are brown; and altogether he is an unimposing figure. CORA watches him closely, as he comes down C. and stands, turning the rim of his army hat in his hands with an air of patience. He seems unaware of anybody, and continues so throughout the next speeches. This is CLARENCE. MRS. MARTYN goes to the table R. and sits.*)

MRS. M. I am Mr. Wheeler's secretary . . .

CORA. (*Interrupting gravely*) She's papa's *confidential* secretary. It's just the same as talking to papa.

MRS. M. We didn't want to keep you waiting any longer, when there's no opportunity . . .

CORA. (*Interrupting her impulsively, but not unsympathetically*) What makes you sag so much to one side?

CLARENCE. (*Turning his head to look at her solemnly*) It's my liver.

CORA. (*Blankly*) Oh! (*Crosses to settle.*)

MRS. M. (*Raising her voice a little emphatically, to put an end to CORA'S talking*) You see, Mr. Wheeler himself *can't* see everybody; and as you

haven't even a letter to him, wouldn't it be the simplest thing for you to state your business to me?

CLARENCE. (*Hesitating rather forlornly*) Wuw . . . well . . . I haven't any business . . . exactly.

MRS. M. (*Dryly*) Well, your desires, then.

CLARENCE. (*Adding a melancholy doggedness to his former manner*) Well—I thought I'd better see him.

MRS. M. (*With a thought*) Have you ever met Mr. Wheeler?

CLARENCE. Not—not yet.

MRS. M. (*Frowning*) Of course we want to show consideration to any soldier . . . (*As she speaks she takes a notebook and a fountain pen from a drawer of the desk*) What is your name, please?

CLARENCE. Clarence Smum. (*Bang drawer on Smum. He does not actually say "Smum"; this word represents MRS. M.'s impression of what she hears. His voice disappears casually, as it were, during the pronunciation of his surname, though he pronounces "Clarence" distinctly enough.*)

CORA. (*Speaking at the same time so that her voice blurs his*) I do think . . . Clarence is a poetic name! Some people don't, but I think it is.

MRS. MARTYN. (*A little embarrassed*) Clarence what, please?

(*CORA, after blurring CLARENCE'S reply by speaking at the same time as CLARENCE, she continues the thought of the preceding speech.*)

CORA. There used to be Dukes of Clarence in history, you know, very wealthy people that the King drowned in a barrel of cider or something. There could hardly be a nicer name than Clarence, no matter what people say. (*CORA still in the same position*) Were you in the war? (*Her voice is eager and serious.*)

CLARENCE. (*Looking at her again*) I was in the
—army. (*Non-committal.*)

(BOBBY rises and looks over the settle at him.)

BOBBY. (*Rises, sternly, in a low voice*) You
don't know him.

CORA. (*Quickly*) It's right to speak to soldiers.
(*Appealing to CLARENCE*) Isn't it?

CLARENCE. (*Solemnly*) If you . . . don't mind
. . . what they say . . . back.

CORA. (*To BOBBY*) I told you.

MRS. MARTYN. Now, if you please, Mister . . .

(*She mumbles after this, covering her difficulty with
his last name, though she frowns and glances at her
book as if for help*)

CLARENCE. (*In his former manner*) Well, I
thought I'd better see *him*.

MRS. MARTYN. If you're looking for a position
I'm sorry. We've taken on more returned soldiers,
really, than we have places for. It would only waste
your own time . . .

CLARENCE. Well—I thought I'd better—

MRS. MARTYN. (*Bothered*) I know Mr. Wheeler
would never *decline* to see you, but— (*Looking at
book*) your first opportunity, even for a few min-
utes, wouldn't come until about Wednesday of next
week.

CORA. (*Going to MRS. MARTYN at L. Impulsive-
ly*) Oh, yes, it could! When Miss Pinney gets
through telling about *me* in there, I'll *cheerfully* give
this soldier *my* time with papa!

MRS. M. (*Bothered*) My dear, that wouldn't—

CORA. (*Quickly. Crosses to R. of table*) Why,
yes, it would! It'd be the best thing that could
happen for everybody! (*Determinedly*) I actually

insist on it, Mrs. Martyn. (To CLARENCE) It's all right. Why don't you sit down?

CLARENCE. (Solemnly) I will. (He sits near R.C. With great care, as if the action might disjoint some internal connection, MRS. M. shuts drawer.)

CORA. Do you have to take pretty good care of yourself like that?

CLARENCE. (Nodding slightly) I do.

READY Buzzer.

CORA. (With great interest) Do you wear spectacles because your eyes got gassed?

CLARENCE. (Slowly) No. They say the liver affects the eyes very much.

BUZZER.

(At this MRS. MARTYN gives up. She throws the book back in the drawer and closes the latter sharply. Then, in response to a buzzer off, she rises and goes out decisively c.)

(CORA is profoundly interested in CLARENCE'S disclosures. She walks in a semi-circle around him to up R., looking at him all the time, her expression concentrated and serious; and still looking at him, she drags MRS. MARTYN'S chair from the table to near him, and seats herself. BOBBY, meanwhile, kneels on the settle to face CLARENCE.)

CORA. How did it *feel* when you first enlisted?

CLARENCE. It felt all right. There was nothing the *matter* with it then.

CORA. (Hastily) I don't mean your liver. I mean how did *you* feel when you first enlisted?

CLARENCE. I was drafted.

CORA. Were you just a private all the time?

CLARENCE. Yes, all the time after I was drafted, I was.

BOBBY. I hope there'll be another war in about a couple o' years or so.

CLARENCE. (*Simply*) You want another war?

BOBBY. You bet! (*He is severe.*)

CLARENCE. So you could be in it?

BOBBY. Yes, *sir!*

CLARENCE. (*Gravely*) I wish you'd been in this one. What would you do?

BOBBY. Flying Corps. That's the life!

CORA. (*Eagerly to CLARENCE*) What did you do in the war?

CLARENCE. (*With a faint note of pathos*) I drove a mule.

CORA. (*Astounded*) What in the world did you do that for?

CLARENCE. Somebody *had* to.

CORA. But what *for?*

CLARENCE. They won't go where you want 'em to unless you drive 'em.

BOBBY. Did you meet Major Brooks-Carmel in France? He's a cousin of ours.

CLARENCE. No. I didn't meet him.

CORA. Did you meet Lieutenant Whitcomb?

CLARENCE. What was *his* first name?

CORA. Hobart. Lieutenant *Sir* Hobart Whitcomb really. He was English—in the Royal Flying Corps.

CLARENCE. No. I didn't meet him.

BOBBY. Did you meet Captain Arthur McKinley?

CLARENCE. I don't *think* I did.

CORA. (*Seriously hoping to establish a point of social contact*) Or Flight Commander Larcher? (*CLARENCE shakes his head*) Or Captain T. P. Schuyler of Englewood? (*He shakes his head*) Let's see . . . (*Discouraged, she considers*) Well,

I don't know *him* myself, but did you meet General Pershing?

CLARENCE. (*Shaking his head, seriously*) General Pershing? No.

CORA. Where do you live when you're home?

CLARENCE. Well, nowhere precisely.

BOBBY. Where was your home before the war?

CLARENCE. It was wherever I was boarding.

CORA. How *inter'sting*! Where did your mother and father bring you up?

CLARENCE. (*Simply*) I was brought up by some cannibals.

CORA. Oh, my goodness! When you were little?

CLARENCE. Yes. That is, my nurse was a cannibal.

BOBBY. My gosh!

CORA. (*Eagerly*) Didn't your nurse ever try to eat you?

CLARENCE. (*As with scrupulous exactness*) No . . . not *me*.

CORA. But didn't they ever try to eat your *family*?

CLARENCE. No—not my *family*.

CORA. Well, who *did*—

BOBBY. (*Annoyed, to CORA*) You don't haf to ask so many *personal* questions, do you?

CORA. (*Earnestly and confidently to CLARENCE*) It's *right* to be personal to soldiers, isn't it—so as to look after their welfare?

CLARENCE. (*Mildly*) It's very public-spirited.

CORA. (*Impulsively*) I think our American uniform is *so* becoming, don't you?

CLARENCE. (*Faintly, plaintive*) Do you mean you think I'd look worse in other clothes?

CORA. (*Untouched*) No, but I *would* like to know why you drove a mule.

CLARENCE. I didn't *select* that branch of the ser-

vice myself. (*A faint emphasis on "select."*)

CORA. You mean somebody told you to?

CLARENCE. Yes; I thought it was better to do what they said.

CORA. (*Earnestly curious*) Did you have to learn to swear at the mules to make them obey?

CLARENCE. (*Thoughtfully*) No. No, I didn't.

CORA. (*Brightly eager, rises and goes over to c.*) Were you ever wounded?

CLARENCE. (*Grimly*) Yes, I was.

CORA. (*Excitedly to BOBBY*) Oh, he was wounded! (*To CLARENCE*) Where was it?

READY VIOLET.

CLARENCE. At target practice! (*His voice breaks to falsetto on the word "target," so extreme is his resentment of this shaft of destiny.*)

CORA. (*Large-eyed*) Was it artillery?

BOBBY. (*In despair of her intelligence*) Oh, my! Artillery! (*Throws up his hands and turns away.*)

CLARENCE looks at him mildly, then at CORA)

CLARENCE. (*Grimly*) It was. It was artillery.

READY VIOLET.

CORA. (*Moving toward him in her excitement*) Oh, that must have hurt.

(BOBBY again manifests his opinion of her by a repetition of his gesture. At the same time, the door L. opens and VIOLET, gravely concerned, somewhat severe, stands there.)

VIOLET. Cora. (CLARENCE rises carefully.) Your father will speak to you now, Cora.

CORA. (*Rising gloomily*) Oh, murder! (*To CLARENCE*) Here's where I get wounded! (*She goes out L.*)

(BOBBY crosses to R.C. VIOLET follows CORA, closing the door. CLARENCE again carefully sits.)

BOBBY. (*Quickly*) See here—

(BOBBY approaches CLARENCE, bringing forth a box of small, gold-tipped cigarettes.)

BOBBY. (*Spaciously, referring to his sister*) See here. (*Puts a cigarette, unlighted, in his own mouth, and brings forth a patent lighter from a pocket, at the same time offering, with his free hand, the box to CLARENCE*) Have a coffin-nail? (*He likes this reckless word.*)

(CLARENCE bends his head over the box, peering at the cigarettes through his spectacles.)

CLARENCE. No, no, thanks.

BOBBY. (*Hopefully*) Oh, you better!

CLARENCE. I believe not.

BOBBY. (*Disappointed*) Don't you smoke?

CLARENCE. I believe I won't here. You see, I want to make a good impression on your father.

BOBBY. (*Glancing R., disappointed*) Well—I guess I'll haf to give up the idea. (*Puts up his materials and sits gloomily.*) The family don't know I smoke yet, and if I couldn't lay the smell to somebody else father might make trouble.

CLARENCE. (*Looking at him without gratitude*) I see.

BOBBY. (*Producing a pair of dice*) Ever roll the bones? (*Rolls them at his feet*)

CLARENCE. I doubt if we'd better.

BOBBY. (*Puzzled, as he picks up the dice*) Don't you shoot 'em? I thought everybody in the army—

CLARENCE. Well, for one thing, I haven't any money.

BOBBY. Blow in all your pay?

CLARENCE. No; not any. They're still saving mine for me in Washington.

BOBBY. (*Innocently*) Why, I didn't know they did that. Do they keep it for you?

CLARENCE. Yes, they usually keep it for you—until you don't need it.

BOBBY. (*Gravely important*) I'll tell you somep'n, if you'll keep it to yourself. (*Showing the dice.*) This is what I got fired for from my last school, too. I've been fired from three schools for it.

CLARENCE. (*Frowning*) Why, that's just autocracy!

BOBBY. (*Pleased, but gloomy*) I can't seem to quit it. Once I get a habit fastened on me I can't seem to give it up. Listen: you been in the army. I'd like to ask your advice about somep'n. (*Gets up thoughtfully, facing CLARENCE*)

CLARENCE. (*Gravely*) I hope you've come to the right man.

BOBBY. Listen; I'd like to ask you because, look, you been in the army and I can tell by your conversation you been around a good deal. (*Sits*) Listen, do you think when a man's taken advantage of a woman's inexperience and kissed her, he's bound to go ahead and marry her even if he's in love with another woman?

CLARENCE. (*Gravely*) Did you kiss somebody?

BOBBY. Yes. I wouldn't again; not her, I mean.

CLARENCE. Was it against her will?

BOBBY. She claims so. (*No especial emphasis on claims*)

CLARENCE. Does she claim you ought to marry her?

BOBBY. She says if I don't, she'll tell the whole family, because, look, the person that was engaged to her saw this thing happen, and he got mad at her, and she says I either got to pay her damages or run

off and marry her. Well, I haven't any money for damages. I wouldn't tell this to everybody.

CLARENCE. No; I wouldn't, either. Who *did* you tell?

BOBBY. Well, I told Cora's governess, Miss Pinney—that just came in here for her. (*Gestures to door L.*)

CLARENCE. What did you tell Miss Pinney for?

BOBBY. Well, I told her her because, listen, this *other* affair, it was just a passing fancy, but, look. I think when something higher and more spiritual comes into your life, why, look, you're just hardly responsible for what you do, don't you?

CLARENCE. You mean when the higher love comes, then you get really wild?

BOBBY. (*Earnestly emphatic*) That's it. You see when this first thing happened I'd hardly even noticed what Miss Pinney *looked* like.

CLARENCE. Miss Pinney is the spiritual——? (*Leaves it unfinished, and BOBBY nods solemnly*) And this other person that has a claim on you—— (*BOBBY shudders.*)

BOBBY. It's horrible! Look, you been in the army and everything, what would you do about it?

CLARENCE. I'd go away to school again.

BOBBY. Yes, but look, when you've been fired from three prominent schools, you get kind of a reputation, and, listen, it's kind of hard to get you in. Father's already had quite a rebuff from *one* Principal and he says himself I'm about as big a responsibility for him as anyone in the family.

CLARENCE. (*Glancing L. uncomfortably*) He does?

BOBBY. Oh, yes, and besides, well, look, I don't want to go 'way just when this *other* thing's happened to me. It's the biggest thing in my *life*.

CLARENCE. You want to stay near Miss Pinney (*assenting*).

BOBBY. (*Simply*) Sure. Wouldn't you?

CLARENCE. (*Glancing at door L.*) Yes, I think I should. (*Then a smile.*)

BOBBY. Because, listen, if I don't, why, look——

(*He is interrupted by the entry of CORA, L. She enters quickly and decisively, being in a state of controlled fury. She is almost oblivious of CLARENCE and BOBBY, as she strides to the chair she has formerly occupied and flings herself down in it. Again CLARENCE rises painfully and sits.*)

CORA. (*As she enters and not pausing when she sits*) They can go to thunder! If two people ever made me tired, it's papa and Miss Pinney! Puritans!

BOBBY. (*Superior*) Oh, they got through with you pretty quick, considerin' what you prob'ly been doin'.

CORA. (*Sharply*) They're not through with me. They're "consultin'"; inventin' the "discipline" they'll haf to put me through! Narrow-minded——

BOBBY. (*Quickly, shrewdly, and severely interrupting*) I b'lieve you been up to somep'n again with that ole grass-widower!

CORA. (*Sharply*) He's not old!

BOBBY. (*Triumphant and severe*) That's it! It's that ole grass——

CORA. (*Interrupting fiercely*) 'Hush up! (*Rapidly*) He's one of the most perfect characters that ever came into my life. (*To CLARENCE, with rapid and indignant and pathetic appeal*) I leave it to you if grass-widowers aren't just as perfect as the other kind of widowers.

CLARENCE. (*Heartily*) Yes, just about.

CORA. (*Oblivious of his comment, going on as before*) I did go out motoring with him and I did

dine at his country club with him, and danced there till twelve o'clock—and then Miss Pinney came and got me, but I leave it to you: is there any harm in that?

BOBBY. (*Immediately*) Well, of all the vile confessions—

CORA. You hush up! Of course I *said* I was going to spend the evening with a girl-friend, but Miss Pinney found out—and what I want to know . . . If *you* were my father . . . (*To CLARENCE*) Would you go into thirty-five fits over a thing like that?

CLARENCE. No. Not that many.

CORA. Why, you ought to *see* those two in there; you'd think they were Judges of the Ex-treme Court of the United States in Washington! What I'm afraid of, they'll never let me see him again! (*Sits, sobs suddenly.*)

BOBBY. (*Sharply*) They ought to drown you; I never heard such a disgusting story in all my . . .

CORA. (*Not noticing him except for the two words; it is all poured out rapidly to CLARENCE*) Hush up! She dee-lib'rutely comes to father with this just because mama's only our step-mother and hasn't got any idea of discipline—and you just ought to *hear* her in there, the way she goes on about being responsible for the shaping of my character because she's my governess! She'll get papa so prejudiced against me . . . (*Voice rising to end.*)

BOBBY. (*Interrupting*) At that, I bet she hasn't told him half she knows about you! (*To CLARENCE appealingly*) Don't some women make you sick sometimes? (*With a gesture at CORA.*)

CLARENCE. No; to me she seems attractive. You see, she isn't *my* sister.

CORA. (*Quickly, earnestly*) Listen; you've been in the army and all that. What would you do if *you* were a girl and in a fix like that?

CLARENCE. (*Shaking his head, sincerely*) I don't

know what I'd do if I were a girl in a fix like that; I don't even know what I'd do if I were a girl.

CORA. (*Appreciatively*) Well, anyway, I think you're awf'ly nice and sympathetic.

BOBBY. (*Frowning*) Aw, fluuf, leave it out! *He* don't care what *you* think!

CORA. (*Rises. Straightening up to look crossly at BOBBY*) How do you know? You don't know him any better than I do.

BOBBY. *I don't?*

CORA. You don't know him as well.

BOBBY. Aw, blub!

CORA. (*To CLARENCE, with earnest, pathetic naïveté, quickly*) I kept trying to talk to papa about *you* all the time. I told him again and again there was a soldier waiting to see him, but they wouldn't let me change the *subject!* I tried to tell 'em about the cannibals, and how you'd been wounded, and about your liver, and I *did* tell 'em how you could drive mules without swearing——

CLARENCE. That wasn't what I said. I said I didn't have to learn how to swear at 'em. But did your father believe you when you *said* I could do it without?

CORA. (*Plaintive to tears*) He didn't say: he switched the subject right back to me. Never mind! (*Vindictively.*) They'll be in a fix, all right, if *mama* hears about it!

BOBBY. (*Scornfully*) *How* will they?

CORA. Why, they can't *tell* her they ignored her in the matter because she's merely an incompetent *stepmother*, can they? Besides that, there's some'n else about *mama* and Miss Pinney and papa. (*Significant and ominous.*)

BOBBY. What?

CORA. I told you once and you were too *dumb* to understand. I'm not goin' to tell you again.

BOBBY. Aw, blub!

CORA. (*Vindictively*) You'll see! Just let 'em wait!

(*The door L. opens and VIOLET comes in, very serious in expression. She leaves the door open. CLARENCE rises.*)

VIOLET. (*As she comes*) We'll go now, Cora. (*Exit up center.*)

BOBBY. (*With a private significance to CLARENCE; taps on shoulder*) Look. (*To VIOLET*) Vi—Miss Pinney, I'd like to have you meet my friend, Mister—uh—Clarence. (*Coughs. He has gone ahead with considerable confidence until passing the word "Clarence."*)

CLARENCE. How do you do?

VIOLET. (*Gravely offering her hand*) How do you do? (*He takes her hand for a moment; she smiles on him.*) I think Cora said you'd been wounded. I hope—

CLARENCE. It's my liv— (*Checks himself*)

CORA. (*Earnestly. At R. of table*) Tell her about it. You make it so interesting.

CLARENCE. No! I—ah—think perhaps—I don't believe I can.

VIOLET. You were wounded in France?

CLARENCE. No, no, I never got out of Texas.

(*WHEELER enters left.*)

WHEELER. Oh, you're the soldier that's been waiting to see me?

CLARENCE. Yes, two days. I've sat longer than that, other places. I've found it's no use seeing anybody anywhere unless you see the top man.

WHEELER. (*Not unkindly, but preoccupied*) I suppose you want a position here?

CLARENCE. I want one anywhere.

WHEELER. (*Shaking his head*) I'm sorry; I wish I had something to offer you, and I wish I had time to talk with you.

CORA. (*Bitterly*) You always say that! You've got plenty of time to talk with *me!*

VIOLET. (*Indignantly*) Cora!

(*WHEELER ignores this, though his frown deepens.*)

WHEELER. (*To CLARENCE, with faint grim humor*) My daughter has informed me that you can drive mules without swearing; I'm sorry I can't go into your other efficiencies, too. If you'll pardon us— Good day! (*Turns away.*)

CLARENCE. (*Gulping, nods, speaks resignedly*) Good day. (*Starts to go up c.*)

CORA. (*Vehemently*) Well, if that isn't rotten, mean! (*Fiercely to CLARENCE*) You wait. (*He halts, undecided. CORA goes on with some vehemence to WHEELER*) You're getting to act just this way about everything, Papa! (*There is a threat of a sob in her voice; she speaks with great rapidity.*)

WHEELER. (*Quickly*) Get her down to the car, Miss Pinney.

CORA. I won't! You expect me to be taken out home and disciplined and not allowed to see anybody, even if he is a grass-widower—

WHEELER. (*Profoundly annoyed, hastily interrupting under his breath*) D'you realize there's a stranger still in the room?

CORA. He's not! He knows all about it. I told him!

WHEELER. (*Wholly disgusted, also disquieted*) Oh, Lord!

CORA. I told him *everything!* (*Bursting into tears, but continuing fast and vehement*) Yes, and I told him how cruel you're goin' to be to me and not let me see *him* any more—oh!

WHEELER. Miss Pinney! Get her in the other office. (*Pointing to CLARENCE, speaks frowningly, quickly*) Wait, young man. (*Pointing to the fireplace settle L.*) Sit down, please. (*Turning to follow CORA and MISS PINNEY L.*) For heaven's sake be quiet!

(*CORA is moving L. under MISS PINNEY's guidance, sobbing "I will see him! What if he is a grass-widower? I will, too." They go out L., WHEELER last. He closes the door. CLARENCE during this has gone to the settle by the fireside and taken his seat there.*)

BOBBY. (*With solemn, slow vehemence*) If ever I have a child like that—— (*He leaves this horrid contingency in the air, leans on the other settle and looks at CLARENCE.*)

CLARENCE. Well, you *may* not.

BOBBY. I guess father was embarrassed havin' you hear all that family scandal and wanted a chance to ask you not to tell it, before you go.

CLARENCE. I'm *afraid* that's all he wanted.

BOBBY. Look, do you consider the army the best preparation for the after life?

CLARENCE. No; I don't think it's particularly good for that—but of course when there's a war, the after life is what you're very liable to have happen.

BOBBY. No; what I mean by the after life is when you marry and enter business.

CLARENCE. I see your point-of-view.

BOBBY. (*Solemn*) You know what I told you—about the one that claims—you know——

CLARENCE. Yes. I remember. Her young man saw you kissing her——

BOBBY. Well, I'd like to get your advice; you been in the army. How would you *treat* her if you were in my position?

CLARENCE. Do you see her very often?



SCENE FROM "CLARENCE" ACT I

BOBBY. (*Gulping*) She's one of our housemaids.

CLARENCE. (*Impressed with the desperate nature of the situation*) Then, I'd be very polite to her.

(*Sob from CORA off L.*)

BOBBY. (*Sighs*) Well—there's one satisfaction. (*Looks L.*) I guess *Cora's* getting the grand mazoomie-zaboo in *there*, all right! (*Amused*) I expect what makes papa about as sick as anything is your happening to hear so much of the family private affairs this way. He's *awful* strong on self-reserve and privacy and all such stuff.

CLARENCE. I'm afraid he'll hold it against me.

BOBBY. You can't tell *what* he'll do; he's as peculiar a man as I ever knew.

(*The door c. opens quickly and MRS. WHEELER comes in; her excitement has increased; she controls it, however, and speaks with crisp decisiveness.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*As she enters*) Bobby—

BOBBY. Hello, mama.

MRS. WHEELER. Our open car's waiting down there. Did you come in it?

BOBBY. No, I came on the—

MRS. WHEELER. (*With slightly raised voice*) Did Miss *Pinney* come in it?

BOBBY. Why, yes, she—came in it.

MRS. WHEELER. Oh, she *did!* (*Comes down*)

BOBBY. Sure.

MRS. WHEELER. (*Pointing at the door R.*) Is she in there with your father now?

BOBBY. (*Contentedly*) Yes. She's in there.

MRS. WHEELER. (*Stung*) Oh!

BOBBY. Her and *Cora*.

MRS. WHEELER. (*Bitterly*) Oh, she brought *Cora* along?

BOBBY. (*Grimly*) I should say she did!

MRS. WHEELER. Has Cora been in there with them all the time? (*She does not emphasize this vulgarly; she is jealous, but is, "technically," a lady; and her emotion, though considerable, is not raucous in expression.*)

BOBBY. No, not all.

MRS. WHEELER. I fancy not! (*Walks up and down.*)

BOBBY. They let her out once, but they had to take her back.

MRS. WHEELER. (*In a disgusted, low voice*) What a farce!

BOBBY. It certainly was! (*Then, beginning to perceive something*) What's the matter with you, mama; you're kind of excited?

MRS. WHEELER. (*With quiet bitterness*) Oh, no; I'm not.

BOBBY. (*Diagnosing*) I s'pose Cora makes you perty mad—

MRS. WHEELER. (*Speaking quickly*) No, she doesn't. I love Cora; I love both of you, Bobby. It's only that being a step-mother's an unfortunate position. One has to leave "discipline" to fathers and—governesses—which means that fathers and governesses have to consult, very frequently!

BOBBY. (*Genially*) Cora was sayin' somep'n about that herself. She said: How could they ever tell you it was no use putting it up to you about her, but she thought herself it was goin' to make you perty mad.

MRS. WHEELER. (*With increasing emotion*) So, even Cora thought I had a right to be angry, did she? Oh, Bobby— (*With a sudden break in her voice.*)

BOBBY. Why, what's the matter?

MRS. WHEELER. (*Just barely keeping the sobs from becoming vociferous*) Oh, Bobby, don't any

of you see what I have to suffer? Don't you understand what I have to bear every day from your father and—these "consultations for discipline"? He and Miss Pinney—— (CLARENCE *interrupts this emotional confidence with a loud, diplomatic cough. Too preoccupied with her own feelings to be much startled*) Is some one—— (CLARENCE *rises.*)

BOBBY. Papa told him to wait there. (*Formally I would like you to meet my friend, Clarence.*)

CLARENCE. (*Bowing as well as his liver will let him*) How do you do? (*He rests his hands on the back of the settle, looking at her.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*Touching her eyes with her handkerchief, nods meekly*) Have you been in here most of the morning?

BOBBY. (*Reassuringly*) Oh, he knows everything that's been goin' on.

MRS. WHEELER. (*Ruefully*) I should think he would! (*With a pathetic smile to CLARENCE*) Well, you've been in the army; I don't suppose there's any real reason to mind your having seen that we're a rather measly family.

BOBBY. (*Reasonably*) Why, no, we aren't. I don't see anything to worry the *rest* of you.

MRS. WHEELER. (*Swallowing*) Well, some of the rest of us do worry, I'm afraid. (*Smiles pathetically*) Don't let me keep you standing. (CLARENCE *has begun to sag.*)

BOBBY. It's his liver.

CLARENCE. (*To him, gratefully*) Thanks. (*Completes his sagging in a sitting position on the settle, where he is again unseen from the greater part of the room.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*To BOBBY, sniffing*) He's very tactful.

BOBBY. (*As a matter of course*) Sure. (*Regards her placidly.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*Tapping her foot*) Have you seen your father at all this morning? Has he been out here at all? (*She speaks rapidly, in a lowered voice, almost a whisper.*)

BOBBY. He came out once.

MRS. WHEELER. Only once?

BOBBY. What is the matter?

MRS. WHEELER. (*In the same voice, panting*) I don't believe I can stand this *much* longer!

BOBBY. You got somep'n you want to see papa about?

MRS. WHEELER. Yes, I have! (*Going towards door L.*) I can't let things go on like this! (*She intends to open the door and go into the room, but is stopped by a long, loud wail in that quarter. Then the door is opened, and CORA comes out, her handkerchief to her eyes, wailing, followed by VIOLET, somber, and WHEELER, stern and indignant. When he sees his wife he confronts her with the air of a man who is angrily bearing enough but expects more. Her expression justifies his anticipations. CLARENCE again laboriously arises and after politely coughing, during the next bit of dialogue, without attracting anybody's attention, subsides again into his seat.*)

CORA. (*As she comes, sobbing*) I we-yull! You were a widower yourself once, papa. Yes, you were! If you . . . (*Sobs*) Write him to stay off (*Sobs*) the place——

MRS. WHEELER. (*In a sharp, loud voice*) Cora! what is it?

CORA. (*With the cry of a refugee flinging herself in MRS. WHEELER'S arms, sobbing*) Mama! They say I can't even see Mr. Stern again! They're treating me like a mere dog! I hope you'll just give them fits!

(*Enter WHEELER L.*)

WHEELER. (*To VIOLET*) Get her home.

MRS. WHEELER. Never mind, Miss Pinney. I'm only a stepmother, but the *child* seems to turn to me instead of to the governess. That seems strange, of course, considering the *father's* preference!

VIOLET. (*Her hand to her eyes as if she had been struck*) Oh! (*She turns away quickly.*)

WHEELER. (*Under his breath to MRS. WHEELER, with sharp denunciation*) Shame, Fanny! (*Louder*) We can't have this going on *here!* Cora! I'll give you five seconds to begin acting like a human being. (*He swings her away from MRS. WHEELER, who stands stung and insulted.*) Pull down your veil! (*To VIOLET*) Miss Pinney, pull it down *for* her. *here!*

VIOLET. (*Her voice shaking*) Mr. Wheeler, I can't—

WHEELER. (*In sharp appeal*) For heaven's sake, don't *you* get upset! Get her out! Get her home! Bobby, you take your *mother* home, d'you hear me?

(*VIOLET is urging the stricken CORA to the door c.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*Bitterly*) Thank you, no! It happens that one person prefers me to Miss Pinney. If it's only poor little Cora!

WHEELER. (*Desperately*) Heaven help me! (*CORA has instantly begun to sob louder.*) Stop her! Don't take her out there while she's . . . (*MRS. WHEELER begins to sob. WHEELER addresses her desperately*) This is an *office*; don't you understand? (*To BOBBY*) Bobby, can't you help Miss Pinney quiet your sister? (*He swings back to MRS. WHEELER, sternly repeating the expostulatory name.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*Sobbing*) Always neglected—

WHEELER. Fanny! Fanny! Fanny! (*She sobs louder*)

(BOBBY has gone instantly to CORA and MISS PINNEY up c. and begun shaking his fist in CORA'S face.)

BOBBY. You shut up! You bet you'll never see him again! (CLARENCE rises again.)

WHEELER. Oh, murder! (He strides desperately away from her toward R., and with horror confronts CLARENCE across the back of the settle. This is an astounding climax for WHEELER.) What are you . . . (Abruptly shifting) Have you been here all through this? Oh, murder, I forgot you!

CLARENCE. I don't wonder at all. (They all have turned to look at him.)

CORA. (Semi-hysterically and pathetically, but quickly) Clarence, you ought to know, you're a soldier. What would you do if you were treated like this?

CLARENCE. (With considerable significance) I'd go home with Miss Pinney.

CORA. (Choking down her sobs) All right, but they'll see— (She goes up c. with VIOLET, pulling down her veil. MRS. WHEELER looks at CLARENCE, and decides to regulate her agitation for the present, as he seems a fixture.)

MRS. WHEELER. (With dignified pathos) Bobby, will you give me your arm?

BOBBY. Why, cert'nly. (Goes to MRS. WHEELER as CORA and VIOLET go quickly out up c. MRS. WHEELER and BOBBY start up c., she with her head bent forward. WHEELER looks at them, frowning, then strides decisively, importantly, at CLARENCE.) Tell you some more about that, next time I see you. (Exit with MRS. WHEELER up c. CLARENCE subsides into his seat.)

(Buzzer off. MRS. MARTYN enters up c., crosses and exits L. Silence. CLARENCE shakes his

head. Decides he's wished away from there. He gets up slowly and forlornly goes up a few steps, having given up. MRS. MARTYN enters L., a box of cigars in her hand.)

MRS. MARTYN. Where are you going, Mr.—
Mr.—

CLARENCE. I thought he—forgotten me again. He seemed to have several other things on his mind—
so I—

MRS. MARTYN. He wants you to sit down, please.

CLARENCE. (*Sitting c.*) Thanks.

MRS. MARTYN. (*Offering cigars*) He said perhaps you'd like—

CLARENCE. (*Accepting*) Thanks.

MRS. MARTYN. He thinks he can find a position for you. But first—he wants me to ask you if it's really true you can drive mules without swearing? (*Seriously, earnestly.*)

(*CLARENCE, preparing to light the cigar, abandons that idea for the present; he looks at her, then at the door up c., through which the disturbed family have gone out; then he looks at her again.*)

CLARENCE. Does that mean he expects to give me a position—at his house?

MRS. MARTYN. (*Dryly*) I think it must! (*Exits LY. CLARENCE half rises; then sits again.*)

(*CORA throws open the door. She is still emotional, is breathless with haste; leaves the door open.*)

CORA. (*All in a breath*) Clarence, if papa brings you home with him, I want you to promise to be my only friend. (*Swallowing hurriedly a sob.*) You'll love it out there, Clarence!

CLARENCE

(VIOLET has entered just before the conclusion of this speech; she is almost running.)

VIOLET. (Seizing CORA's hand and taking her quickly to the door) Cora! Come along! Come along home, Cora! (The trick accent which has just barely tinged her former utterances elusively is somewhat more pronounced in this exigency.)

CORA. Don't forget, Clarence!

(Exit with VIOLET, who closes the door decisively not releasing CORA. VIOLET, as she gets to door, turns and nods pleasantly. CLARENCE with a dreamy smile, repeats VIOLET'S accent "Come along.")

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—A “drawing room” or “living room” and in connection with it a “solarium”—the 1912-1919 rendition of a “conservatory.” The walls are panelled, ivory colored—and the architecture and decoration are altogether symmetrical. Down c., in r. wall, are double doors of glass, moderate sized panes, the glass shielded by thin material.

In the wall space to r. of this opening is a dark, oval portrait, a decoration merely . . . and there is a similar portrait in the corresponding space l. of the opening.

There is a “Baby Grand” piano up r. on stage by steps c.—the other furniture is comfortable, harmonious, and not “pronounced” or eccentric, or even “clever”—the tone is kept light, and there is no varnished wood or high polish.

At back is platform with balustrade on either side and steps. Centre down archways r. and l. are the entrances to this room, there are pillars c. which opening leads beyond to glass doors c. which open to garden.

This is a “sun-room.”

In the drawing room the lamps are not lit, and the curtains of the sun-room are pulled back, showing an Autumn day beyond . . . mainly the trees (pines and oaks) of a large suburban yard . . . a yard of several acres, with perhaps the glimpse of the rather distant roof of an opulent neighbor.

CLARENCE

In the sun-room, with a mop and bucket, is DELLA, washing the tiles of the floor. DELLA is about thirty—not at all like a “French maid”—but very like an American-Irish one at \$7.00 a week. She is rather robust and not particularly plain of face—it is possible to understand why BOBBY kissed her. At times, finding something obdurate upon the tiles, she kneels and works with a scrubbing brush from the bucket. She is in this position at the beginning of the Act, and is conversing with an unseen person a room or so distant to her L. This person makes no visible entrance either now or later, but has a thin voice, higher and older than DELLA’S, and also, like DELLA’S, there is the faint remnant of an almost worn-out brogue.

THE VOICE. Della?

DELLA. I hear ye, Rosie.

VOICE. D’he say how his liver is to-day?—the poor sojer-boy?

DELLA. He did not.

VOICE. I want to know: what is he?

DELLA. (*Rising to the mop*) Well, some o’ the time he runs the typewriter in the boss’s lib’ry up-stairs.

VOICE. He do?

DELLA. He fixed the hot water heater in the basement, day before yesterday; he’s a bit of a plumber. I think.

VOICE. Well, then what’ll he be?

DELLA. He’ll be annything you ask him to be. (*Sentimentally*) He’s a sweet nature.

VOICE. He’d be better lookin’ if it wasn’t fer . . .

DELLA. Hush, Rosie!

(CLARENCE enters R.—he is still in his old uniform—he still somewhat stoops and sags at times; but

there is an improvement in his appearance. He walks without limping—is straighter; he is no longer sallow or "hollow-eyed"—his hair is more orderly. His expression is one of patience, as if his army experience and his liver, and the consequences of both, as well as his present situation, were things to be accepted with resignation. He has dispensed with his spectacles. He carries a small, crumpled leather cylinder in his hand, and places it upon the piano. He lifts the piano lid, and sighs.)

(DELLA comes down—casually—leans on piano.)

DELLA. You're lookin' better, Clarence. *What's become of yer spectacles? (Pauses in her work.)*

CLARENCE. They told me to wear 'em until I got so I could see without 'em. I could, yesterday. *(He unfolds the leather, displaying a set of small tools.)*

DELLA. Where'd you git them tools?

CLARENCE. I borrowed 'em from the Swede.

DELLA. What kind of tools are they?

CLARENCE. *(Taking out some of the tools)* Automobile tools. *(He begins to tune the piano with them.)*

DELLA. *(Simply inquiring)* Are they good fer a piano?

CLARENCE. *(Explaining mildly)* That would depend on what you did to a piano with 'em.

DELLA. *(Exclaiming)* You ain't a piano-tuner, now!

CLARENCE. Yes, now. *(Scales.)* I noticed one or two of the keys were off . . . I thought I could make 'em sound better.

DELLA. *(Impressed)* How d'ju know how?

CLARENCE. *(Absently)* Well, you see, I've been in the army . . . *(As if this were a part of an explanation to follow.)*

DELLA. (*Protesting*) Why, Miss Cora says you drove a mule in the army!

CLARENCE. Well, I know just as much about tuning pianos, as I did about driving a mule.

DELLA. (*Puzzled*) Clair'nce, what line was you in *before* you went in the army?

CLARENCE. I was working in a laboratory.

DELLA. Oh? In a hotel, I s'pose? (*Then amused*) Rosie was wonderin' if we ought to call you "Mister Clair'nce"! (*Then seriously interested, gently*) Have y'iver been married, Clair'nce? (*He shakes his head, operating upon the piano. She goes on ominously. Music.*) What a body sees in this house wouldn't put 'em much in a mind fer marryin', I guess! (*Music*) Young lady o' the house under watch to keep her from runnin' away wit' a grass-widdywer; the Missuz crazy wit' jealousy; the boss in love wit' the governess . . . (CLARENCE strikes a thunderous chord that makes her jump.)

CLARENCE. (*Chord!*) Yes, and the young son of the house threatened with breach-of-promise by a housemaid! It is shocking, Della!

DELLA. (*Astounded*) Who told you that, Clair'nce? (CLARENCE loudly plays the beginning of "Here Comes the Bride," not looking at DELLA, but at the arch r. appears a man-servant, DINWIDDIE, who carries a tailor's double carton of considerable size. He wears a dark sack-coat, black trousers, black bow tie. He enters in a human manner, but freezes with repugnance at sight of DELLA. He approaches CLARENCE. CLARENCE plays "Here Comes the Bride." *Dulcet. Crosses to L.*) What have ye there now, Mister Dinwiddie?

DINWIDDIE. Cook says they're yours, Clarence. She says you brought 'em in and left 'em in the back hall. See you've got your pay from the Guvment, and gone to squander'n' it first thing. Bought yourself some clothes.

CLARENCE. (*Preoccupied with piano*) Yes. Would you mind putting them in my room for me, Dinwiddie?

DINWIDDIE. (*Sincerely*) Well, I'm not sure it's my place to do that, Clarence. You been here about three weeks now, and the domestic side of the household ain't able to settle what you are.

CLARENCE. What I are?

DINWIDDIE. I mean, are you one of us, or do we treat you as one o' the family?

CLARENCE. (*Gives him an absent-minded glance, continuing, preoccupied*) It doesn't matter.

DINWIDDIE. (*Perplexed, but kindly*) I'll take them up for you this time, anyhow. (*DELLA crosses to L. DINWIDDIE crosses to R. Starts out R., but stops halfway and speaks placidly, without looking at either CLARENCE or DELLA*) I'm sorry to see you in loose company, Clair'nce. (*Goes straight out through glass doors down R.*)

DELLA. (*Going to G., bitterly. Comes towards him, angrily agitated*) Clair'nce, would you talk like that of Miss Pinney jist because you'd happened to see somebody a-kissin' of her?

CLARENCE. (*At piano. Stung*) What? When did anybody . . .

(*READY BELL*)

DELLA. (*Cutting him off*) I said if ye did? Now listen: If somebody caught ye bein' kissed ag'inst yer will wouldn't you say somebody had to do the right thing by ye?

CLARENCE. (*Shaking his head*) Oh, if that happened to me . . . I'd be very upset . . . I don't know.

DELLA. (*Goes up C., mopping in doorway—emphatically*) Well, it did happen to me, an' I do know! (*Exits arch L.*)

(*BOBBY opens door L. anxious—he keeps out of DELLA'S sight.*)

BOBBY. (*Enters R. In hoarse whisper*) Could you get her to "greet" anything? (*Goes up, sees DELLA—dodges back L. of CLARENCE.*)

CLARENCE. I thought better not try yet. She seems right bitter.

BOBBY. (*Nervously depressed*) Well, stick by me, Clarence; I cert'nly need help!

(*A bell sounds off. BOBBY exits hastily R. Bell DELLA stands with her cheek against a window in the sun-room, peering to off R., getting an oblique view of the principal entrance to the house, evidently.*)

DELLA. (*Looking off R.*) Well, if that ain't a bold man!

CLARENCE. Bold?

DELLA. It's that grass-widdywer. Miss Cora's. Ain't he callin' at the very front door! (*Turns away.*)

CLARENCE. What's his name?

DELLA. Mr. Hubert Stim.

CLARENCE. (*Thoughtfully*) Stim?

DELLA. (*Down to CLARENCE*) He's rich, and he's had the experience o' wan wife: he'd be a good match fer anybody.

(*Enter DINWIDDIE. Goes up L.*)

DINWIDDIE (*Coldly*) Callers? This is no place for all the loose help. (*Music.*)

DELLA. (*Impotent to avenge herself*) It's a bad world! (*Exit to off L. up, with her bucket and mop.*)

(*At the same time VIOLET enters up C. She wears a quiet, pretty afternoon dress. As she comes in, CLARENCE rises from the piano bench.*)

VIOLET. (*Enters with hat from garden. To DINWIDDIE*) I'll see him in here. (*CLARENCE rises. Exit DINWIDDIE up L.*) No, please go right on tuning the piano, if that is what you're doing. (*Puts hat on table. She is quick and decisive in manner; somewhat perturbed, too. CLARENCE has begun to lower the lid. He turns to her gravely*)

CLARENCE. You mean you want me to go on tuning the piano while you talk to—?

VIOLET. (*Smiling*) Yes, I do.

CLARENCE. (*Restoring the lid to its highest position*) I'll be glad to. (*Sits and resumes his work. VIOLET goes down L.C.*)

(*MR. HUBERT STEM enters. MR. STEM is about 26, cheerful, good-looking, "smart"—he wears a homespun or tweed "sack" suit, and is daintily haberdashed. Goes to VIOLET.*)

STEM. Good afternoon, Miss Pinney. (*He glances at CLARENCE with some surprise.*)

VIOLET. (*Gravely*) How do you do?

STEM. You got my note?

VIOLET. That's why I am seeing you. (*Music.*)

STEM. Ah . . . isn't there somewhere we could go?

VIOLET. (*Shaking her head*) Nowhere else, I'm afraid.

STEM. Well . . . if this is my only chance to see you . . .

VIOLET. (*Biting her lips*) Please listen. Mr. Wheeler agreed with me . . .

STEM. (*Interrupting cheerfully*) Yes. Mr. Wheeler always agrees with you, doesn't he? (*CLARENCE'S sounding of a key becomes a little more emphatic.*)

VIOLET. (*Her voice somewhat sharper*) He agreed with me that I'd better see you the next time you came and explain to you clearly . . . (*Music.*)

STEM. (*Glancing at CLARENCE, who seems all the while profoundly occupied with the piano*) This is a splendid chance for a clear explanation!

VIOLET. It won't disturb me in what I have to say.

STEM. That's another thing shows how remarkable you are!

VIOLET. Mr Wheeler prefers not to see you *this* time himself. (*Music.*)

STEM. I should think he might prefer that! (*Referring to CLARENCE'S music.*)

VIOLET. (*Quietly but grimly*) He wished me to say that in *future*, if you call here, he *will* see you himself; and that if there are notes or telephone messages, *he* will receive them and reply. (*Music.*)

STEM. (*Hopfully*) But why wouldn't he let *you* be the one to see me and receive notes and telephone messages from me? That would be what I've been working for.

VIOLET. (*Primly*) I have told you what he asked me to.

STEM. (*Eagerly*) But you haven't answered my question. (*Music.*) You know what it's about?

VIOLET. No.

STEM. (*Becoming loverlike—crosses to VIOLET, close*) It's about *you*; it's all been just an excuse for that. You've kept yourself out of my way; well, I'm inventive. I'll tell you a secret; it was I that telephoned you. Cora and I were at the Country Club dance. I did it all . . . just for a glimpse of *you!* (*Music.*)

CLARENCE. (*As if profoundly concentrated in his work*) B flat. B flat. Same old B flat.

STEM. (*Huskily to VIOLET*) This is intolerable! (*Goes L.*)

VIOLET. (*As if about to rise*) There's no need to prolong it; I've said all I need. (*Half rising*)

STEM. (*Suddenly desperate, goes to her*) No!

If you *will* see me with a piano-tuner in the room, why I don't care, you'll have to listen! You know why I've taken the only means I could find to even get a *glimpse* of you now and then! Violet, how long are you going to keep me . . . (CLARENCE *bangs the piano.*) Confound it! (*He walks over to CLARENCE.*) See here, my friend . . .

CLARENCE. (*Rising politely*) It's Mr. Stim, I believe?

STEM. (*Sharply*) Mr. *Stem*, not Stim! Mr. Hubert *Stem*! Let me say, I'm usually *glad* to see the returned soldiers getting their old positions back, but they do take a holiday sometimes, don't they?

CLARENCE. (*Innocently*) You mean you'd rather I did this some other time?

STEM. (*Showing him a bill, unseen by VIOLET*) There'll be this in it: Get your hat and coat and go back to the city: you can tune this piano some other time.

CLARENCE. (*Mildly*) Tune it? I finished tuning it quite a while ago. All this last you've heard: I was playing.

STEM. (*Taken aback—he looks at VIOLET as if to inquire whether she has noticed that the tuner is perhaps insane; then shows the bill again to CLARENCE*) Just get your things and go back to town.

CLARENCE. (*Amiably*) I can't; I live here.

STEM. What?

VIOLET. (*Rising*) Oh, this is one of Mr. Wheeler's secretaries, Mr. Stem.

CLARENCE. (*Rising again quickly, shakes hands*) How-dy'-do, Mr. Stem? It was an Irish person told me it was "Stim." You're not interested in music?

STEM. (*Dryly*) No. Are you?

CLARENCE. (*Crouching and again sitting on the piano bench*) Oooh! (*He whispers this, appreciating that STEM has scored.*)

STEM. (*Turning to VIOLET*) Miss Pinney, won't you come out for a breath of air?

VIOLET. (*Shaking her head*) Thanks. (*Music.*)

STEM. (*Desperately to CLARENCE*) Won't you come for a breath of air?

CLARENCE. (*Mildly surprised*) You want *me* to take a walk with you?

STEM. Well, if you'd go ahead, I'd come after you, and take you over and show you my place. Aren't you interested in Nature?

CLARENCE. (*Shaking his head*) No. All I care for's my music.

STEM. Your what?

CLARENCE. (*Politely*) Perhaps you'd rather I didn't . . . (*With a gesture to the keys.*) Shall I . . . ?

VIOLET. Do.

STEM. (*Entreating hoarsely*) Violet, won't you?

(*She shakes her head, and places a piece of sheet-music before CLARENCE on the rack. VIOLET goes up to piano and kneels on settee.*)

VIOLET. Do you know this?

CLARENCE. (*Quickly changing the air*) Well, I can try it. (*Does so*) It's pretty, isn't it? Kind of sad.

STEM. (*Going up step and on platform. Controlling himself*) I think I'll say good afternoon!

(*VIOLET nods. CLARENCE, half rising, bows graciously. STEM strides out R. CLARENCE resumes the air he is playing.*)

CLARENCE. (*Playing*) I couldn't tell, but it seemed to me almost as if you wanted to get rid of him.

VIOLET. (*Dryly*) Did I? (*Goes down stage of piano, arranging sheet music on the piano.*)

CLARENCE. (*Turning from the keys*) It seemed almost as if you'd taken some prejudice against him.

VIOLET. (*Sinks into seat at piano*) Well, don't you think it's pretty odious of a man, when he knows a girl dislikes him, to pursue her by pretending to pursue a younger girl who's in her charge?

CLARENCE. Are you consulting me on this point because I've been in the army, or more on the ground that I'm a person?

VIOLET. (*Smiling faintly*) More on *that* ground.

CLARENCE. That surprised me. However, speaking to your point that a pursuer belonging to the more cumbersome sex becomes odious to a fugitive of the more dexterous sex, when the former affects the posture of devotion to a ward of the latter . . . (*He pauses, judicially, for a moment—and she interrupts him, amused.*)

VIOLET. (*Simply curious*) Were you a college professor before the war?

CLARENCE. (*Conscientiously*) Not. Not a *professor*.

VIOLET. Surely not just a student?

CLARENCE. No. Not a *student*.

VIOLET. Well, then, what . . .

CLARENCE. (*Earnestly*) What I was leading to was, that I, personally, am indifferent to your reason for finding this young man, or any other young man odious.

VIOLET. (*Somewhat offended*) Thank you. I didn't put it on *personal* grounds, I believe. (*Rises and goes c.*)

CLARENCE. (*Rises*) The *reason*, I say, is indifferent to me. I merely experience the pleasure of the *fact*.

VIOLET. (*Surprised and puzzled*) What fact?

CLARENCE. That you don't like him. (*Returns to piano and tools.*)



VIOLET. (*Staring*) I believe you are the queerest person I ever met.

CLARENCE. (*Nodding*) That's what my grandmother always said of my grandfather, and they *had* been married sixty-one years. (*Gathers his tools.*)

VIOLET. (*Impressed*) Your grandfather was as queer as that?

CLARENCE. No. Only to grandmother. (*Starting to go out R.*)

VIOLET. Are you *very* much like him? (*CLARENCE stops abruptly and turns to her.*)

CLARENCE. I'm just as much like my grandmother; you see, I'm descended just as much from her as I am from him.

VIOLET. I never thought of that. (*Laughs*)

CLARENCE. (*Earnestly*) Well, after this, won't you think of me as just as much like her as like him?

VIOLET. (*Rather stiffly*) Isn't *that* a little "personal"?

CLARENCE. Personal? Good gracious! *You've* just been discussing *my* most intimate family affairs: my grandfather, my grandmother . . .

VIOLET. (*Checking him impatiently*) Never mind! I *will* think of you as just as much like your grandmother as your grandfather!

CLARENCE. It's very kind of you to think of me.

VIOLET. (*Sharply*) I didn't say . . .

CLARENCE. (*Cutting her off, rapidly*) It's kind because you've got so many to think of: I want you to think of me; Mr. Stim . . . Stem! . . . wants you to think of him; Bobby wants you to think of him; Mr. Wheeler wants you to think . . .

VIOLET. (*Interrupting angrily*) That will do, please!

CLARENCE. Well, but doesn't . . .

VIOLET. (*Sharply—quickly*) You *know* my po-

sition in this house; do you think it's manly to refer to it?

CLARENCE. I don't know about "manly"; maybe this is where I'm more like my grandmother. My idea was merely that since so many want you to think about them, if you'd just concentrate your thoughts on somebody that had been in the army, it might avoid . . . complications.

VIOLET. (*Bitterly*) Do you suppose I'd stay in this house another hour, if I hadn't given my word to Mr. Wheeler I'd stand by Cora, until she comes through this nonsense? He asked me to just stick it out until the child's come to herself again, and I gave him my word I'd do it. It seems *you* take Mrs. Wheeler's view of me!

CLARENCE. But, Mr. Stem . . . he's . . .

VIOLET. (*Sharply*) If I told Cora the truth about him, she'd only hate me. If I left her, she'd do the first crazy thing she could think of. She's *really* in love; it's a violence, but it may last a long while.

CLARENCE. She tells *me* it's "forever"! I'm her only friend and she made me her only confidant . . . except her stepmother, and Della, and Dinwiddie, and both of the chauffeurs. She told us that when she first saw him, she knew it was forever. (*Amiably*) Do you think it's advisable, Miss Pinney, for . . . anybody to fall in love . . . permanently?

VIOLET. (*Turning away coldly, then facing him*) I don't think I feel like holding a discussion with you about such things . . . or anything else.

CLARENCE. (*Looks at her, his head on one side, philosophically*) That must be all, then. (*Starts out r., but pauses as she speaks.*)

VIOLET. When you first came here, I thought you were another friendless person, like me; pretty well adrift in the world, so that you had to make your-



self useful in whatever you could find, just as I did. I did make that mistake; I thought I'd found a friend!

CLARENCE. Couldn't I keep on . . . being found?

VIOLET. (*Decisively, but with feeling*) Thank you, no! Not after what you said a moment ago! I'm glad you said it, though, because I like to know who my enemies are! (*Crosses L., then up to window*)

CLARENCE. (*Blankly*) Oh? (*He puts his head on one side, looking at her. She sits R.*)

(*CORA is heard off up L., in the sun-room, calling.*)

CORA. (*Off up L.*) Clarence! Clair-uh-unce! (*VIOLET turns up. She comes in seriously and eagerly up R., in the sun-room, wearing a modish afternoon dress.*) Clarence, Dinwiddie says you've been throwin' your money around on clothes. (*As she comes down*) I wonder how you *will* look out of a uniform! Funnier than ever, I expect, don't you? (*Genially*) *Don't* you think maybe you will, Clarence?

CLARENCE. No. I think it'll be an improvement.

CORA. Bobby says you wouldn't know what kind of clothes to order, Clarence.

CLARENCE. That is, he thinks they'd be different from his?

CORA. Do put 'em on.

CLARENCE. Why, I was going to. (*Goes R.*)

CORA. We all want to see you in 'em. (*She imperfectly suppresses a giggle.*)

CLARENCE. (*At door, nodding*) So do I.

(*VIOLET goes to couch and sits.*)

CORA. You know, Clarence, you always did seem an awfully peculiar kind of a soldier.

CLARENCE. That's what the officers kept telling me.

(CLARENCE *exits* R.)

CORA. Isn't he the queerest ole thing? He's awful sympathetic and useful around the place, and so mysterious and likable; but I overheard mama telling papa last night she thinks he must be crazy for hiring him just because he could drive mules without swearing, and nobody knows a *thing* about him. Papa said it was mostly because Clarence was a stranded soldier and he didn't have any place for him except to dictate his letters to when he was home, but he guessed maybe he *was* crazy to do it. (*Pauses*) What's the matter with you?

VIOLET. Nothing.

CORA. You look the way you do when you're teaching me Latin. Did you know Clarence had begun tutoring Bobby in Math? Bobby says Clarence is a Wiz. at Math. Oh, yes, and I . . . (*Sits*) overheard Della talkin' to Bobby, and then Bobby talkin' to Clarence, and Bobby's put all his affairs in Clarence's hands. (*VIOLET sits.*) Clarence said he'd do the best he *could*, but he thought Bobby belonged in Salt Lake City, whatever he meant by that. Isn't he *weird*!

VIOLET. (*Frowning*) Yes; I think he is . . .

CORA. By-the-way, who was here a while ago?

VIOLET. Someone called on *me*.

CORA. (*Beginning to be suspicious*) Who was it?

VIOLET. Cora, don't you understand—when a person says "someone," that means not to ask?

CORA. (*More suspicious*) I believe I'll ask Dinwiddie. (*Rises, goes c.*)

VIOLET. It won't do you any good; he won't tell you.

CORA. Why won't he? Did anybody give him orders not to tell me?

VIOLET. Never mind that, Cora.

CORA. *You did!*

VIOLET. If I did, I had authority for it.

CORA. (*Sharply*) Then it *was* Hubert Stem! You can't deny it!

VIOLET. (*Stiffly*) I'm not called upon to "deny" anything to you, Cora.

CORA. (*Goes up to window c. Loudly*) It *was!* He *was here!* It *was him!*

VIOLET. (*Wearily, but sharply*) It was "he," Cora. You *must* begin to look after your pronouns.

CORA. (*Coming down again. Loudly, almost tearfully*) What do I care for your old pronouns! You *know* he *was here!* He was here, tryin' to see me, and you kept him *from* it. You drove him away, I know you did! You drove him away!

VIOLET. (*Gravely, quickly*) No. I *wanted* him to go, but if anybody drove him away, I think it was Clarence.

CORA. (*Furiously*) That upstart? He dared to drive out a guest of mine? Then just wait till I get a chance at *him!* Does Clarence think he's *master* around here? (*Instantly becoming emotionally pathetic, her voice loud and tremulous*) Which chair did he sit in when he was here?

VIOLET. (*Coldly*) He sat on the piano bench. (*Crosses down to seat R.C.*)

CORA. (*Loudly plaintive*) Oh! (*She sinks to the floor by the piano bench, her arm caressingly over it.*) Oh, Hubert! Poor Hubert! You came to find *me*, in spite of everything, didn't you? And they treated you so cruelly, so . . .

VIOLET. (*Sharply*) Mr. Stem stood over *here!* It was Clarence on the piano bench.

CORA. (*Jumping away from the bench with an outcry, as if it had stung her*) Ah! (*Jumping up*) What did you *tell* me Hubert sat there for?

VIOLET. You're not going to go through it *again*, are you, with the couch?

CORA. (*Heaving angrily*) What did that horrible Clarence *do* to him to drive him out?

VIOLET. (*Gravely*) Well, he didn't use profanity. You know, that's one thing your father said he engaged Clarence for; because he said he could *drive* without strong language.

CORA. (*Outraged*) Do you mean to insinuate that Mr. Stem is a mere mule?

VIOLET. (*Quickly*) Oh, get hold of yourself, Cora.

(*Enter BOBBY from up L. on balcony.*)

CORA. I won't! (*Determinedly*) I'll let *everybody* understand this much: If there's got to be any insinuations about drivin' mules in this family, I can be just as mulish as anybody! Yes, and I *will* be, too!!

(BOBBY, *during this speech, is in a state of exasperation.*)

BOBBY. (*Coming down*) You certainly will! Oh, I heard you, but you're wrong! I guess if there's goin' to be any mulishness in this fam'ly, it'll be from me! How often do I have to tell you you're not to speak to Violet like this? Shame on you!

CORA. (*Her eyes wide with fury*) Why, you mere, miserable little . . .

BOBBY. (*Vehemently cutting her off*). Don't you know that this is one of the most spiritchal and high-minded women that ever lived? (*Gesticulating at VIOLET.*) The idea of your troubling *her* about your petty amours with that Hubert Stem . . . (*He is interrupted in full gesture. DELLA has followed him, and at this moment makes her appearance at the R.*)

side of the sun-room opening, up c. Except for her head, she is only partially seen.)

DELLA. (*Rather ominously*) Could I have another word wit' ye, Mr. Robert?

BOBBY. (*Looking over his shoulder fiercely*) No, you can't! Go 'way from there! (*DELLA withdraws. He returns instantly to the attack on CORA*) Let me tell you, if there's goin' to be any mules in this fam'ly . . .

CORA. (*Violently*) You hush up! (*She flings herself into a chair, kicking her heels up and down on the floor, and repeating*) Hush up! Hush up!

BOBBY. (*Indignantly*) I'll make myself heard! You never did have any more idea of behavior than the merest scum! Why, look at *me* . . . (*Glancing to where DELLA has appeared*) why, I got more troubles in my private life than people would have any conception of . . . you don't hear *me* howlin' around like some frowsy cuttle-fish, do you?

CORA. Hush up!

BOBBY. I tell you when you attack this lady, that soils her soul by bein' your governess, you simply an' positively put a stain on your whole vile sex!

VIOLET. (*Quickly, crossly*) Bobby! I can do my own defending, please, and I'm a member of the same sex.

BOBBY. (*Vehemently*) No, you're not! I'd never believe it! There may be *some* women the same sex as Cora, but not you! It was only the third or fourth time I ever saw you, a kind of a somepin' came over me and I wanted to live a higher life. (*CORA bursts into wild laughter. He instantly whirls upon her, shouting*) You hush up! What you laughing about? I believe you're historical.

(*MRS. WHEELER has entered up c. from up R. during this. She speaks quickly*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*Annoyed*) What is the din? Really Miss Pinney, if you can't keep better order than this . . .

CORA. (*Jumping up, laughing loudly*) Bobby says a somepin' came over him when he saw Violet . . .

MRS. WHEELER. (*Quickly*) Yes; that's not unusual, it seems!

(*The scene is played rather rapidly.*)

CORA. (*Going on*) And he wants to live a higher life!

MRS. WHEELER. That's not *always* her effect!

BOBBY. Well, what if I do? That's no disgrace, is it?

CORA. (*At BOBBY*) I know something on you! (*BOBBY wheels.*) Not any higher life, either! (*This is a vicious threat*) You wait till papa comes!

BOBBY. If I ever catch that Hubert Stem around this place . . .

CORA. (*Choking at the name, crosses to MRS. W.*) Oh, mama! He was here! (*Emotional again.*) He came to try to see me! That little brute of a Clarence drove him out!

MRS. WHEELER. (*Incredulously*) Clarence did?

VIOLET. I take the responsibility for that!

MRS. WHEELER. (*Loudly*) You take a great deal of responsibility, Miss Pinney!

BOBBY. (*Hotly*) Well, papa wants her to, doesn't he?

MRS. WHEELER. (*Emphatically*) Yes! He does!

BOBBY. Who else but Miss Pinney has *any* control over this . . . this . . . this . . . (*His denunciatory finger leveling at CORA.*)

CORA. (*Shouting*) I'll get you, Bobby Wheeler! (*She shouts "Hush up!" throughout the following speech*)

BOBBY. (*Bawling*) I'll take that Hubert Stem, and I'll pull his legs and arms off like a mere spider!

(WHEELER enters up R. He has just come from his office, and has on his hat and overcoat, a folded newspaper is in his hand. Neither CORA nor BOBBY are aware of him. CORA continues to shout "Hush up!" and BOBBY goes on)

BOBBY. You threaten me, and I'll show you who's master in this house! You got the worst disposition . . .

(WHEELER strikes the newspaper several times, quickly and sharply, into the palm of his hand for silence, which stops them. He is indignant, disgusted and tired.)

WHEELER. Stop it, stop it! I could hear you at the front door!

CORA. (*Goes to WHEELER at c.*) Papa, I found out to-day Bobby kissed Della, and she says he's got to marry her or breach o' promise, an' she'll tell the fam'ly on him! Now he's in love with Violet! (*Whirling on BOBBY. Goes up R.*) Didn't think I knew that, did you?

BOBBY. (*Hoarsely*) Cuttle-fish!

(MRS. WHEELER crosses to couch R.I., sits.)

WHEELER. (*Sternly to him*) I'll speak to you later. (*Taking off hat and coat.*)

BOBBY. (*Alarmed, but vindictive. Crosses to WHEELER.*) Her grass-widower was here again. We had to drive him out, and she got convulsions.

CORA. (*Beginning to wail*) Oh! (*This sound continues.*)

WHEELER. (*Handing his hat and coat to BOBBY, decisively*) Take these out.

BOBBY. (*Bitterly*) I'll do it! (*Passes behind WHEELER and up off R.*)

WHEELER. Cora, either stop that, or go to your room and wash your face.

CORA. (*Going up with extreme pathos, weeping*) Wash my face, wash my face, wash my face . . . (*Up off R.*)

WHEELER. (*Up R.C., frowning*) I'll go over this with you, Miss Pinney.

MRS. WHEELER. (*On couch R. Burlaquing politeness*) Oh? With Miss Pinney? Do excuse me! It's so unusual—your wanting to be alone with her! I didn't understand for the moment you wished me to leave the room!

WHEELER. (*Drearily and disgustedly appealing with a gesture, but not rising or turning to her*) Oh, please, Fanny!

MRS. WHEELER. (*Angry, yet plaintive*) As it seems I'm nothing in anybody's life, I—

WHEELER. (*Interrupting sharply*) Oh, for pity's sake!

MRS. WHEELER. (*Sharply, breathing quickly*) Oh, I'll not interfere with this charming—interview! (*Exit up C. to off L.*)

(VIOLET swallows painfully, her lip quivers; she controls herself and comes near WHEELER, who still sits rubbing his head.)

VIOLET. (*In a low, quick voice*) Mr. Wheeler, I think you'll have to relieve me of my promise.

WHEELER. (*Not changing*) No; I can't do it. (*Painfully, but as if absently.*)

VIOLET. I really think you'll have to. I can't go on—I really can't.

WHEELER. (*In same manner*) No. You said you'd stick to the job and see the children through. I can't depend on anybody but you. I've got to keep you to your word. (*Slight emphasis on "got."*)

VIOLET. But it's getting beyond my strength—and my temper.

WHEELER. I know. I know. The children get beyond your strength and my wife gets beyond your temper— (No pause.)

VIOLET. (In a low voice, affirmatively) Yes. (No pause.)

WHEELER. But I've got to keep you. Sit down, will you? (He begins to pace, across and back.) Let's see if we can think what's to be done. Was that man Stem here?

VIOLET. I gave him your message.

WHEELER. Did he try to hang about and see Cora?

VIOLET. He tried to hang about. Clarence got rid of him.

WHEELER. (Musing absently and gloomily) Odd thing about—Clarence. I don't know just why I took him up and brought him out here. Crazy sort of impulse—anything but like me to do that. He seems all right, does he?

VIOLET. Yes, I think so. (Noncommittal. Then she bites her lip, remembering her enmity.)

WHEELER. (Still absently) Friendly sort of friendless creature. I had a—a feeling—if he could drive an army mule with such courtesy—well, I don't know just what it was—a feeling that in some way he'd be a good influence—here. (Turning toward her) Is Cora's story true about that damn boy?

VIOLET. About Bobby? (Pauses.)

WHEELER. Oh! You don't want to tell on him? Is it his behavior—that makes you want to leave?

VIOLET. No. But I think I must go, Mr. Wheeler.

WHEELER. Where would you go? Have you a chance at another position?

VIOLET. No.

WHEELER. What would you do?

VIOLET. Look for one, I suppose.

WHEELER. (*Abruptly*) I can't let you do that. (*She looks up, somewhat startled by his tone.*)

VIOLET. What did you say—

WHEELER. (*Swallowing, speaks with sorrowful feeling, simply*) I said I couldn't let you do that. See here; I suppose I've seemed to you just a commercial machine—head of a big business and head of an unhappy, rowing family, like so many of us machines. Well, I'm *not*—not altogether. (*Sits. On couch R.*) I'm a pretty tired man. The naked truth is I'm pretty tired of the big business and pretty tired of the family. It's so. Sometimes I don't know whether I'm an old man or just a sort of worn-out boy; I only know the game I play isn't worth the candle, and that I want to get away from the whole thing. (*His voice trembles a little.*) I don't think I *could* stay with it, if you don't stay and help me.

VIOLET. (*Touched*) Oh, poor Mr. Wheeler!

WHEELER. If you give *me* up, I'll give everything up. (*His tone is quiet throughout, but he is in desolate, utter earnest.*)

VIOLET. (*Gentle but troubled and a little breathless*) Oh, I don't think you should quite say that, should you?

WHEELER. I've never seen how people could get away from the truth. I've got people I can rely on in *business*—but you're the only person I can fall back on out *here*.

VIOLET. Oh, no!

WHEELER. And a man's house is more important than his business, too. What am I going to do about it?

VIOLET. (*In a low, troubled voice*) I—don't know. (*She stands with her head bent, turned away. He is profoundly grave.*)

WHEELER. If you can't stand it here——

VIOLET. (*Feebly, blankly*) What?

WHEELER. (*His voice husky, but somewhat louder than it has been*) If you can't stand it, I can't! If you quit, we both quit.

VIOLET. (*Rises, plaintive*) I don't think I understand that. I'm free to go, Mr. Wheeler, but——

WHEELER. (*Rising. With a kind of husky, but not noisy, desperation*) Well, I can be free, too.

VIOLET. (*Entirely taken aback*) Oh—— (*She falls back from him, her hand to her cheek, staring at him. At the same time a long, strange wail is heard up off L. The two remain in their present attitudes, freezing with horror. The wail continues, growing louder. It issues from the throat of Mrs. WHEELER, it appears. She comes in from the arch L., weeping, still wailing.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*Her wail becoming verbal*) I heard every word! You needn't run away—I'll go! Drive me out; I haven't got any one to go with me! (*Loudly*) Oh, I'd take him if I had! Oooh—— (*The wail increases. She flings herself in a chair L.C.*)

Saxophone.

WHEELER. (*Desperate, wailing himself*) Ah, murder! Who was talking about going with anyone? (*Another wailing, not unlike Mrs. WHEELER's in quality, is heard off up R. It likewise approaches, though slowly; the two sounds mingle*) Oh, my soul! I can't stand this! (*WHEELER comes down. To VIOLET passionately*) Could you stop Cora just this once?

VIOLET. (*Goes down R., sharply*) It isn't Cora's voice.

WHEELER. It's Cora! (*To Mrs WHEELER*) For pity's sake, Fanny, pull yourself together! (*He starts up C., shouting fiercely*) Cora! Stop it! Stop it! Cora!

(DELLA appears in the sun-room, walking backward from off R. She is in a high state of excitement, lifting and dropping her arms in a strange rhythm, as if keeping time to some grotesque stimulant. WHEELER, without pausing, shouts at her)

WHEELER. Tell Cora she's got to stop it! Tell her I say——

DELLA. (*Shouting*) It ain't her! It ain't Miss Cora! (*Struck by this, and by the peculiar nature of the approaching sound, WHEELER falls back.*)

WHEELER. What!

DELLA. It's *him!* It's Mister Clair'nce all dressed up and wastin' his money on musical instruments!

WHEELER. (*Hoarsely, crosses down R.*) Oh, my soul!

(*The sound has now resolved itself into the loud cry of a saxophone rendering a march. CLARENCE marches on in the sun-room; he is the musician. Behind him CORA prances, clashing the silver covers of two dishes together for cymbals, and loudly singing the air. Behind her DINWIDDIE pompously dances, beating a tray with a large spoon, and whistling. This procession evidently intends to move along the sun-room from off R. to off L., but is arrested by WHEELER'S vehemence.*)

WHEELER. (*Bellowing*) What in the name of— (*They stop; so does the music. MRS. WHEELER has stopped crying and has risen.*)

DINWIDDIE. (*Alarmed*) Oh! (*He bolts to off R.*)

WHEELER. (*Gasping*) What in the——

CLARENCE. (*Removing the saxophone from his*

mouth) We didn't know there was anybody here.

CORA. (*Enthusiastically*) Look at him, papa! (*CLARENCE has made a remarkable change in his appearance; he wears a beautifully fitting new suit of exquisite gray or fawn material, and he has been at pains to brush his hair becomingly; has a scarf-pin in his tie; and altogether is a most dashing figure.* CORA goes on, without pausing) Isn't he wonderful, mama?

MRS. WHEELER. (*Seriously and emphatically*) Why, yes! He is!

CORA. (*Bringing him down, holding his sleeve*) He went and bought *those* (*his clothes*) and the most glorious evening things all out of what he made in the war, and he borrowed the Swede's saxophone and never even told us he could play it! Just look at him! Turn around! (*Obeying her gesture, made as she speaks, he solemnly turns round, so that they may see his back.* CORA is carried away by helpless admiration. She almost moans this; then as he faces front again) Oh, Clarence!

(BOBBY enters up L.C. from off up L. and approaches CLARENCE.)

CLARENCE. I'm afraid we disturbed—— (*He stops, meeting BOBBY's estimating eye.*)

(BOBBY walks all round him, CLARENCE's eyes following him wonderingly until BOBBY passes behind him. Then CLARENCE looks over the other shoulder as BOBBY comes round on that side.)

BOBBY. (*Condescendingly*) Pretty good! Pretty good!

CLARENCE. (*Blankly*) What——

BOBBY. (*With a gesture to mean the new outfit*) Pretty good.

CORA. (*Vehement*) Nobody ever knew he could play at *all*! He never *said* a thing——

CLARENCE. (*Interrupting solemnly*) They transferred me from the band to the—mule-team.

CORA. (*Jumping up and down*) Come on; we've got to play some more—— (*She pulls at his sleeve. Takes CLARENCE to piano.*) Come play his accompaniment, Violet.

VIOLET. (*Controlling her agitation, answers hastily*) No. I can't. (*Crosses R.*)

CLARENCE. I'm afraid we might disturb—— (*He looks from VIOLET to WHEELER.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*Sharply*) No, you won't disturb *anybody*!

(*WHEELER comes down to chair R.*)

CLARENCE. I'm afraid—we might——

MRS. WHEELER. (*Seriously, almost passionately*) It's beautiful! It's the most beautiful music I ever heard in my life. *I'll* play your accompaniment, Clarence. I'd adore to! (*Goes to piano.*)

CORA. (*Pulling him to the piano*) C'm on! C'm on!

CLARENCE. What is it?

CORA. William Tell!

MRS. WHEELER. In B flat.

CLARENCE. Same old B flat.

(*WHEELER crosses to settee L. and sits. MRS. WHEELER plays loudly upon the piano. CLARENCE does likewise upon the saxophone.*)

DELLA. (*She has remained, hovering in the sun parlor. She now edges into the room, leans against the balustrade and lifts her eyes in rapture before speaking*) Oh—ain't it hivinly!

(CLARENCE looks solemnly round at her, not ceasing to play, and turning his whole body to keep the instrument in position. WHEELER also looks at her, then back at his paper. CLARENCE turns to the piano again. CORA, looking up at him, sings the air, and BOBBY, having joined the group, condescendingly adds his voice. After a moment or two, VIOLET, who is R., opens the door R. and goes out. The saxophone stops abruptly. CLARENCE has been watching her out of the corner of his eye.)

CORA. (With quick solicitude) What's the matter, Clarence?

(This is as if some illness threatened her only child.)

CLARENCE. Nothing. (Solemnly resumes playing.)

CORA. Oh, Clarence! (She sings again and the music continues.)

CURTAIN.

ACT III

SCENE: *The same. The lamps are lit. The curtains in the sun-room have been pulled over the glass. The doors R. are wide open.*

DELLA, R.C., *is looking off through these doors in a manner expressing the warmest and most sympathetic admiration of something she is watching. She clasps her hands in a Madonna gesture beside her cheek, her eyes uplifted.*

DELLA. (*Fondly muttering*) Ah! (*Pause*) Ah, now! (*She becomes haughty and repellent*) Whoosh! (*Tosses her head and moves slowly to R.C.*)

(*The cause of her change of manner is the approach of DINWIDDIE. He comes in R., dressed for dinner service, with a silver tray, silver coffee-pot and sugar, cups and saucers. He looks sternly at DELLA, then takes the tray to a table. She again looks off through the door R. from her position C., and resumes her fond gesticulations. DINWIDDIE looks at her several times with extreme disapproval; then he looks intently at the ceiling.*)

DINWIDDIE. (*DELLA turns in contempt to DINWIDDIE. DINWIDDIE addressing the ceiling*) I don't speak to no one here present, but if they was a little bird I could see up there in the sky——



DELLA. (*Interrupting, plausibly*) In the sky? It's the ceiling. Even if you was outdoors, it's dark an' you couldn't see no birds.

DINWIDDIE. (*Persisting*) If they was a little bird up there—(*Looks at her, then up again*)—I would speak to him and I would say: (*Coldly*) Bird, the fam'ly is comin' out from dinner in a minute or so, an' this ain't no place fer domestics of smirched reputations. (*Puts tray on table L.C. Concludes looking at her.*)

DELLA. You better run then!

DINWIDDIE. (*Sternly*) I am as pure . . .

DELLA. Are ye talkin' t' the bird? (*He utters a sound of pain and fiercely arranges the tray. She responds with a short laugh, and resumes her admiring interest of off R., going on rapturously*) 'You can see right through t' the dining-room. From here you can see him eatin'—just as plain! (*She indicates her joyous contempt of this measure by the briefest sketch of an undignified dance.*)

DINWIDDIE. Sickening!

DELLA. (*Jeeringly*) Speakin' to me?

DINWIDDIE. (*Lifting his eyes*) I'm speaking to the bird!

DELLA. (*Runs across, opens one of the doors slightly, looks through and becomes rapturous again*) He's eatin' his dessert!

DINWIDDIE. (*Explosively*) Who is this Clair-nce? Nobody knows! (*Still looking up*) Nobody knows a thing about him—not a thing!

DELLA. (*Unheeding, clasping her hands in soft rapture*) He eats so pritty!

DINWIDDIE. (*Fiercely, looking at her*) Oh, my Guh— (*He catches himself in the middle of the word, looks up, and without pausing, goes on*) Oh, bird!

(BOBBY, in his dinner clothes, hastily enters R., he has a cautious manner, yet nervous and quick.) ↵

BOBBY. (*To DINWIDDIE*) D'ju take Miss Pinney's dinner up to her room for her?

DINWIDDIE. She sent word she didn't wish any.

BOBBY. (*Crosses to DINWIDDIE*) Mamma says for you to go up and ask her from *her* if she won't please come down here as a favor.

(*DINWIDDIE exits L.*)

DELLA. (*Looking off R.*) You could never believe it!

BOBBY. (*Suspiciously*) Believe what?

DELLA. That Mr. Clarence used to be a wash-room man in a hotel. Of course, there's tips. . . .

BOBBY. (*Incredulous*) You say he worked in a hotel lavatory?

DELLA. He told me so.

BOBBY. Why, that's horrible! The fam'ly ought to know about this.

DELLA. Little Ainjill! (*Looking R.*)

BOBBY. Now, see here! I don't want any endearments from you. All that was mere sensuality on my part, and nothing permanent at all. If you come around here callin' me "angel" . . .

DELLA. (*Exclaiming in denial*) Oh, bird!

BOBBY. I'm tired of all this blackmail; the fam'ly know about it, anyhow. You can't call me "bird" nor "angel" nor . . .

DELLA. (*With a wan laugh*) I didn't mean you, Mister Robert! (*She is looking off R.*)

BOBBY. (*Staggered*) Who did you mean? (*Earnestly, with an inspiration after a glance over his shoulder to R.*) Did you mean Clarence?

DELLA. (*Dreamily*) Oh, yes!

BOBBY. (*Earnestly*) Well, if he's taken this burden onto himself off o' my shoulders he's done *some* good if he *was* a lavatory porter! After usin' these terms over another man, you can't dogmatize *me* any more!

DELLA. (*With a sweet, dreamy look*) All but the most willin' thoughts has gone out o' my mind. (*Goes up.*)

BOBBY. Well, that's a relief to *me*, whatever you mean.

(*VIOLET enters L., wearing the same dress seen in the second act. Her expression is serious.*)

VIOLET. (*Quickly, as she enters*) Mrs. Wheeler sent for me.

(*Exit DELLA up c. to off r.*)

BOBBY. (*Instantly*) Oh, Violet! (*This is in a voice of dreamy inexpressibleness, but is spoken quickly. He starts toward her*) Oh, Vio . . .

(*He is checked by MRS. WHEELER'S entrance r. She is in a handsome evening gown with jewels, camelias in her corsage; a pretty evening scarf over her shoulders, a fan in her hand. She looks radiant! Comes in briskly and speaks quickly.*)

MRS. W. (*As she enters*) Run away a minute, Bobby, please. (*BOBBY goes out r. quickly. MRS. W. stands r.c. near the coffee table, smiling graciously, and going on at once*) Miss Pinney, I'm going to be very direct. I want you to forget that little scene this afternoon if you will.

VIOLET. (*Standing by a couch l.c., her hands moving slightly upon the top of the back of it, her eyes cast down*) I'm afraid I can hardly do that, Mrs. Wheeler.

MRS. W. (*Coming to couch—amiably*) Mr. Wheeler is rather worn out, and he forgot himself for a moment and said things he didn't mean—and—

(*Bus. sits on couch with a little laugh. VIOLET sits R. end of couch*)—so, perhaps, did I, I'm afraid. You said nothing at all that I could object to. That's all there was of it. Somehow everything seems so much cheerfuller in this house, this evening, than it has for a long time. I've told my husband that I'm not in the least angry with him—why should I be? I hope we're all going to be—happier, we all need *something* in our lives. And about this afternoon, well, it was a *mistake*; that's all—suppose we just pass it over?

VIOLET. (*Profoundly perplexed*) I'm afraid I— (*Rises, goes R.*)

MRS. W. (*Cheerfully, goes behind table c.*) Tut, tut, now! Now, please, you wouldn't have any dinner; you'll at least have your coffee?

VIOLET. (*At c.*) I . . .

MRS. W. I'm sure you will, just to please your friends, we're all friends this evening. (*Calling*) Come back, Bobby! (*She pours the coffee. BOBBY appears in the doorway R. At R. of couch. Nodding gaily*) Tell them their coffee's getting cold. Take this to Miss Pinney, dear. (*BOBBY takes the cup of coffee she hands him to VIOLET, who accepts it perplexedly and both sit R. Mrs. Wheeler, pouring other cups, calls to off R.*) Aren't you coming? (*WHEELER, in dinner clothes, very serious, enters R., smoking a cigar just lit. Mrs. Wheeler addresses him amiably*) Come in, poor, dear man! Here! (*She gives him a cup*) Go and sit by poor Miss Pinney and cheer her up. (*Goes on pouring, not looking up.*)

WHEELER. (*Going to Mrs. W., L. Heavily embarrassed*) Thanks. I'm smoking—I'll—uh— (*Goes up to sun-room. BOBBY sits by VIOLET.*)

MRS. W. (*Beamingly to R.*) Waiting for you.

(*CORA enters R. She is in a very pretty evening*

dress appropriate to her age; and her expression is wanly solemn. She comes in slowly, halts just in the room and sighs inaudibly but not visibly, as she opens her mouth to do it. This is facing front; then she looks R.)

CORA. (*Crosses L. In an earnest, solicitous, solemn voice*) Aren't you coming in here, Clarence?

CLARENCE. (*Door R. Entering R.*) Yes, oh, yes. (*He wears new dinner clothes, has a camelia in his button-hole. He is somewhat apprehensive*) Oh, thank you! (*Speaking across the room*) Good evening, Miss Pinney. (*She nods slightly*) I'm sorry to hear you had a headache. (*She acknowledges this faintly*) I hope it's very much better. . . . I hope you haven't any at all by this time. I hope . . . (*Starts to sit by MISS PINNEY at R.*)

CORA. (*Reprovingly, in a hushed voice, solemnly, huskily*) Let's sit down. Let's sit down here, Clarence. (*Divan L.C.*)

CLARENCE. (*Crosses to couch L.*) Oh, yes, thanks. (*He sits upon the R. side of divan, facing front. CORA sits exactly at the same time he does, to L. of him, facing him, her profile to front, her elbow on the back of the divan, her hand to her cheek. MRS. WHEELER puts a cup and saucer in his hand, smiling benevolently.*)

MRS. W. (*Gently*) There, Clarence. Is it right?

CLARENCE. Thanks.

CORA. (*Not moving, speaks sacredly*) He takes one lump in the evening, Mamma. He takes two in the morning. He told me so, himself. Didn't you, Clarence?

CLARENCE. Yes.

MRS. W. (*Putting a lump of sugar in C.'s cup gently*) Is this right, Clarence?

CORA. Yes, Mamma.

CLARENCE. Thanks. I'm sorry Miss Pinney's headache . . .

CORA. (*Dreamily*) Oh, Clarence! (*He turns to look at CORA. Her fixed look at him is embarrassing.*)

CLARENCE. (*Solicitously to CORA*) Mayn't I give you some coffee?

CORA. (*Unchanging*) No. No. No coffee.

(*To avoid her gaze, he turns and smiles feebly to MRS. WHEELER. Her instantly responsive smile is such that his own fades, and he looks forward blankly.*)

MRS. W. (*Smiling solicitously*) Is there anything you want, Clarence?

CLARENCE. Oh, no!

BOBBY. (*L. near VIOLET*) I expect he'd like Cora to quit lookin' at him. (*Speaks slowly and with calm bitterness. There is a pause. Then, earnestly marveling, he adds to VIOLET*) My goodness, she didn't even try to make any repartee!

CORA. (*Unchanging, in a monotone throughout*) Clarence? Clarence? (*He looks at her; he has been trying to look at VIOLET*) Clarence, aren't you going to play some more for us? I want you to play. I want you to play right away. (*Still unchanging*) Bobby, run up to Clarence's room and get his saxophone for him.

BOBBY. (*Calmly but doggedly*) I will not.

(*WHEELER goes to table and MRS. W. takes cup.*)

CORA. (*Unchanging except for the slightest note of plaintiveness*) Papa, won't you please go get his saxophone for him?

WHEELER. (*Up c. Mildly incredulous*) What did you say?



MRS. W. (*Amiably*) Do, Henry.

WHEELER. (*Coming down a little way*) Do what?

MRS. W. (*Pleasantly*) Won't you go and get Clarence's sax—

CLARENCE. (*Coughing hastily*) Oh, no, no! I don't think I play really at all well.

(*WHEELER turns up again.*)

CORA. Then if you won't play, will you answer me one question, Clarence?

CLARENCE. (*A little suspicious*) What is the question?

CORA. (*Wistfully*) It's simply, Clarence, what was the matter with your liver?

CLARENCE. If I answer you this time, will you promise never to ask me again?

CORA. (*Quickly*) Yes. What was the matter with your liver, Clarence?

CLARENCE. I was *shot* in it!

MRS. W. (*With eager loudness*) At Chateau Thierry?

CLARENCE. (*Explosively, his voice breaking with protest*) No! At target practice!

(*MR. WHEELER sits up L. in armchair.*)

CORA. (*After a pause*) What else did you do that was heroic, Clarence?

CLARENCE. (*Despairingly*) I beg your pardon?

CORA. What was the next thing you did in the war?

CLARENCE. That was the *last* thing I did. I didn't do any more after that.

CORA. (*Unable to express her dreamy wistfulness*) Oh, Clarence!

(*He sighs and sets his cup on the table. BOBBY rises, crosses and puts cup on table.*)

BOBBY. Has Hubert Stem been telephoning or anything this evening, Cora? (*Apparently casual.*)

CORA. (*Not looking at him, speaks carelessly*) Who?

BOBBY. That ole grass-widower Stem.

CORA. (*Vaguely*) "Stem?" (*As if the name were unknown*) What about him? (*Impulsively, BOBBY crosses to R.*) Clarence, you must have been standing somewhere in the way of the target!

CLARENCE. I heard—afterwards—that I had been.

MRS. W. (*Cheerfully to him*) Sha'n't we all go and see if it's moonlight on the veranda, Clarence? (*Rises. WHEELER notices this with surprised annoyance.*)

CLARENCE. (*Blankly*) I should be delighted. (*Rises, preparing to go. WHEELER comes down a little.*)

CORA. (*Dreamily*) No. Let's stay just like this.

MRS. W. (*In an ordinary, pleasant tone*) Yes. It's lovely here. I suppose moonlight is in one's heart, after all . . . in any heart that's found something to put moonlight about. (*WHEELER comes down, by piano*) That's the *hard* thing: to find someone to pour moonlight out on. But when you do, it doesn't matter where you are. Don't you think that's true, Clarence?

CLARENCE. (*After a somewhat disturbed glance at WHEELER*) I'm sure it must be.

CORA. Clarence, I do want you to play again. Papa, won't you *please* run and get . . .

CLARENCE. (*Hastily*) I really don't think I should. You see, it's only an accident that I ever knew how to play at all. (*WHEELER is down.*)

WHEELER. (*Drily*) How was that? How could you learn to play the saxophone by accident?

CLARENCE. Why, we used to see whether certain

species of beetles found in Montana are deaf, or if they respond to peculiar musical vibrations.

(BOBBY rises, and comes down, he and WHEELER glance at each other.)

CORA. (*Dreamily*) Beetles! How wonderful! How could you tell if the beetles responded to the vibrations?

CLARENCE. We placed them in a dish filled with food, that they were passionately fond of, and then I played to them. If they climbed out of the dish and left this food and went away we knew they'd heard the music.

BOBBY. (*Rises, very serious*) Are the hotels good out in Montana? (*He has risen on CLARENCE'S speech.*)

CLARENCE. I don't know. I was living in a tent.

WHEELER. (*Drily*) Hunting those beetles?

CLARENCE. Yes. They live outdoors.

BOBBY. (*Staring*) And you were playing the saxophone to 'em?

CLARENCE. Yes. Hours and hours at a time—to the deaf ones. It got very tedious.

(WHEELER and BOBBY mark this as another incredible statement.)

CORA. I wish I'd been one.

BOBBY. (*Huskily*) You wouldn't haf to *change* much!

CORA. Were there any cannibals in Montana, Clarence?

(WHEELER looks from CORA to CLARENCE.)

CLARENCE. (*Mystified*) No. Almost everything else but no cannibals.

WHEELER. (*To CORA, severely*) What do you mean? Cannibals in Montana?

CORA. (*To all, casually*) You know he was brought up by the cannibals.

WHEELER. (*Gravely incredulous*) He was?

CORA. (*Going on quickly*) And they never tried to eat him or his family. He told me the first time we met him. They tried to eat almost everybody else, but they never tried to eat him or his family. *Did they, Clarence?*

(BOBBY and WHEELER turn up to the sun-room; disappear thence to off L. *Exit.*)

CLARENCE. No! But that wasn't precisely what I intended to convey to your mind!

CORA. (*With gentle reproach*) It was that day in Papa's office, Clarence, you said the cannibals—
(*She is interrupted, to the mystification of herself; MRS. WHEELER and CLARENCE, by VIOLET, who breaks into irrepressible laughter. They look at her, and CLARENCE rises.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*Staring in surprise*) Miss Pinney! (CLARENCE walks across and looks solemnly at her: then he looks at MRS. W., then back at VIOLET, who rises, trying to control her mirth, but not succeeding) Is she hysterical?

VIOLET. I'm not hysterical!

CLARENCE. (*Gravely, to MRS. WHEELER*) She says not.

VIOLET. (*Turning from him, still out of control*) Please go away! (*He takes a step back, utterly mystified.*)

CORA. (*Rising, incredulous and indignant*) Is she laughing at Clarence?

VIOLET. (*Protesting almost hysterically*) Oh, never! Never! I could never do anything like that!

MRS. W. (*Going c., smiling*) It might be tactful of us to go and see if it really is moonlight on the veranda, don't you think so? (*To CLARENCE.*)

CORA. (*Quickly and decidedly, as she goes up*) I'm coming, too, Mamma!

MRS. W. (*Drily*) Of course, dear. (*Smiling and extending her hand toward CLARENCE*) Aren't you coming?

CLARENCE. (*Blankly*) Oh—thanks—— (*He goes up; each takes one of his arms.*)

MRS. W. (*Happily*) It is moonlight out there!

CORA. (*Leaning back to look at him better*) Oh, Clarence! (*This is always quiet and wistful.*)

CLARENCE. (*Hurriedly*) That reminds me; something I forgot—— (*Detaching himself.*)

MRS. W. (*Quickly*) We'll send and get it.

CLARENCE. Well, in fact, it's something I forgot to ask Miss Pinney. I'll come in *just* a moment.

MRS. W. (*Amiably, a little bothered, going*) Oh, of course.

(*Exit up L. CLARENCE starts down.*)

CORA. (*Going*) Not a long moment?

CLARENCE. (*Reassuringly, stopping*) No, no. (*Exit CORA up L., giving him a wistful final look.*)

CLARENCE turns to VIOLET) Of course when you told me to go away——

VIOLET. (*Interrupting*) That's why you—*didn't?*

CLARENCE. Well, of course when a lady declines to eat her dinner on account of a headache, and then laughs at you out of a clear sky and tells you to go away, why—no—— In fact—you don't!

VIOLET. You mean you stayed because you're curious about why I laughed. (*Half question, half assertion.*)

CLARENCE. No. I just mean I stayed.

VIOLET. (*Looking up at him with hidden amuse-*

W. S. Van Dyke
1916

SCENE FROM "CLARENCE" ACT III



ment) Don't you want to know why I laughed?

CLARENCE. (*Uneasily*) I'm not *sure!* I'm not at all sure I do; people aren't usually made much cheerfuller by finding out why other people laugh at them!

VIOLET. (*With an inclination of her head toward up L.*) You told *them* you had a *question* to ask me. (*Gravely*) You oughtn't to keep them waiting.

CLARENCE. A question? Yes. You said this afternoon we couldn't be friends any more. My question is: if that wasn't just an afternoon rule that we could consider not operating in the evening.

VIOLET. Hardly!

CLARENCE. Couldn't?

VIOLET. It was on account of what you said this afternoon that I laughed at you this evening. (*In a lower voice, turning from him*) You have so many to think of, you know!

CLARENCE. (*Puzzled*) I? To "think" of!

VIOLET. (*With indignant amusement*) Doesn't it seem rather funny, even to you: *your* giving me that little lecture this afternoon about the people that you said wanted me to "think" of them?

CLARENCE. (*Enlightened*) Oh, you mean when I said I wanted you to think of *me!*

VIOLET. (*Scornfully*) Oh!

CLARENCE. You mean you got to thinking about that this evening, and that's what made you laugh. You thought it was so funny my wanting you to think of me.

VIOLET. (*Gaily*) No; I thought it was so funny your giving me that lecture; *you* see, *you* seem to have so many to think of that I *don't* want you to think of *me!*

CLARENCE. (*Earnestly*) I'd like to do what you want: I don't know. I don't know whether it could be stopped or not. A person goes around thinking



—it wouldn't make any *noise*, just thinking. It needn't disturb you at all.

VIOLET. (*With scornful amusement*) I think you'll be able to stop it.

CLARENCE. (*Plaintively*) But it's the only pleasant thing I do!

VIOLET. (*Scornfully*) Oh!

CLARENCE. (*Going on plaintively*) It seems unreasonable to be asked to give it up. I'd even rather give up my music!

VIOLET. (*Emphatically*) Oh, believe me! *That*, you'll *not* be allowed to give up!

CLARENCE. (*Apprehensively*) Don't you think I will? I don't think Mr. Wheeler cares for it particularly.

VIOLET. Neither do I; but I'm sure you'll have to keep on with it, that and your wonderful stories about beetles and—

CLARENCE. (*Interrupting*) Those weren't stories; it was perfectly true.

VIOLET. (*With feeling*) I *hope* it was truer than what you said to me this afternoon, when you—when you thought fit to bring—to bring Mr. Wheeler's name into your lecture.

CLARENCE. I only meant to—well, I thought a friendly warning might—

VIOLET. (*Smouldering*) You meant that this—friendliness—to me was troubling his wife. (*Indignantly and pathetically*) As if I could—help—

CLARENCE. If you cried—I—couldn't stand it!

VIOLET. (*Going on brokenly*) As if I—knew which way—to turn—or what to do—

CLARENCE. If you cry I'll do something queer!

VIOLET. (*Her indignation getting the better of pathos*) I sha'n't cry! I only want you to imagine that *Mrs. Wheeler's*—friendliness—to you—had already begun to attract her husband's attention—and to annoy him!

CLARENCE. (*Somewhat stiffly*) Ordinarily I'd want to imagine anything you wanted me to imagine, but I could hardly imagine *that!*

VIOLET. No? You couldn't?

CLARENCE. (*More stiffly*) Certainly not!

(BOBBY enters quickly up c. from off L.)

VIOLET. (*Seeing him*) I think you're wanted! (*Significantly.*)

CLARENCE. (*Stiffly*) I beg your pardon.

VIOLET. (*More significantly*) I think you're sent for.

(CLARENCE turns, following her glance, and sees BOBBY.)

BOBBY. (*Very serious*) Mama wants to know how long before you're coming.

CLARENCE. (*Bothered*) Ah—does she?

BOBBY. So does Cora.

VIOLET. (*Quietly*) You mustn't keep them waiting. (CLARENCE looks at her coldly.)

BOBBY. (*Coming down*) There's just one thing I want to say. I don't mind speakin' of it before Miss Pinney because I already told her all the worst in my nature, and it's better to be above-board anyhow, isn't it?

VIOLET. (*Looking at CLARENCE*) Yes. I think it is.

CLARENCE. (*Sharply*) Why, certainly it is!

BOBBY. Well, it's just this: I might of paid mighty dear for a mere imprudence, if Della hadn't got the way she is over you, Clarence.

CLARENCE. *Della?*

BOBBY. Whatever happens to you, I want to thank you for that.

CLARENCE. (*Astounded*) Thank *me* for—for the way—*Della*—“*is—over me*”?

BOBBY. That's practically all I had to say. Whatever it is about you that's got Mama and Cora so upset, why Della acts just about the same as they do and it's certainly a great relief to *me!* So now I've thanked you, and it's pretty cold out on that veranda, and they told me to say— (*He is interrupted by CORA, who has just come on from up L. and stands up c. She wears a wrap.*)

CORA. (*Sweetly plaintive*) Clarence, Mama says maybe you don't want to come—

CLARENCE. (*Desperately—crosses L.*) Miss Pinney—

VIOLET. They're waiting for you! (*Crosses L. up to L. of table. He gives her an indignant look.*)

CORA. (*Dreamily*) Aren't you coming, Clarence?

CLARENCE. (*In an agonized voice*) Oh, yes; thanks! (*He goes up to her.*)

READY WHEELER

CORA. (*Cosily as they move L.*) You like us all, don't you, Clarence?

(*Exeunt up L.*)

BOBBY. (*After a glance at this departure*) It's just as well for you, you didn't come down to dinner; you could hardly eaten any anyway, the way Cora was sayin', "Oh, Clarence!" and Mamma almost as terrible. I and Father hardly could, ourselves!

VIOLET. (*With amused distaste*) And you say Della— (*Turns down to BOBBY.*)

BOBBY. I caught her callin' him an angel. Oh, not to him; but she can't hamper *my* career after that! She says he told her he used to work in a hotel wash-room—

VIOLET. (*Not believing it*) Oh, no.

BOBBY. Well, anyway, it's only another of his stories about himself. Look, whenever he says any-

thing about himself it's somp'n a body can hardly believe, or else disgraceful like that. I and Father been havin' a talk about him and we both think it'll be better if you don't have any more to do with him, Violet.

VIOLET. Why?

BOBBY. Look; the way *I* look at it is simply; well, simply look at the way Cora and Mama and Della *are!* Look, you don't want to get like that; you got an awful high nature. It brings out all the most spirichul things I got *in* me, and *we* think this is gettin' to be a serious matter.

VIOLET. (*Puzzled*) Clarence is?

BOBBY. (*Even more earnestly*) Look; don't even let him talk to you. (*Casually*) Course we don't feel it makes so much difference about Cora and Mamma—(*Becoming earnest again*)—but with your spirichul nature, Violet, and all this and *that*, and he telling about these Montana beetles, and them listening to a saxophone, and being brought up by cannibals, and this mule story without bad language, and then workin' in a hotel lavatory—(*WHEELER enters up c. from off L. BOBBY and VIOLET do not see him*)—and all thus and so, why, *we* think it's time somep'n'll haf to be *done* about it!

VIOLET. What like? (*Somewhat troubled.*)

BOBBY. Well, I and Father—

WHEELER. (*Up c. interrupting*) Never mind, Bobby. (*VIOLET moves to go out*) Please, Miss Pinney— (*Coming down c. This detains her.*)

BOBBY. (*Sits*) I guess we better talk it over frankly, now we're all three here.

WHEELER. (*Gives him a thoughtful glance*) No. I'm going to ask you to step out for a moment, Bobby.

BOBBY. (*Getting up, gravely surprised*) Me? Well, all right. I only want to say just one thing,

listen: When my *own* son is practically a grown man, I *think* I shall know how to value him! (*Exit coldly C.L.*)

VIOLET. (*In a low voice—goes to WHEELER*) What is it about, Clarence?

WHEELER. (*Much troubled, but quiet*) Just a moment. I see now that whatever I decide to do with my own life, I've got first to straighten out my mistake in bringing him here. But I want to tell you I *was* "overwrought" this afternoon—I suppose I am still, for that matter—but I meant every word I said.

VIOLET. (*Troubled, looking down*) Oh, no, Mr. Wheeler.

WHEELER. (*Doggedly*) Yes, I did. (*She shakes her head*) Oh, yes.

VIOLET. (*Quietly, not looking up*) You don't know how sorry I am for you. (*Moves away a little.*)

WHEELER. (*With feeling, but quietly*) I felt I simply couldn't stand the situation here, unless I could rely on your helping me.

VIOLET. (*Looking up seriously*) I think things have just got too much for you, Mr. Wheeler.

WHEELER. (*With a controlled desperation*) If they were that, this afternoon, they're *more* than that to-night, don't you think? (*More loudly*) I've never seen anything like it! You couldn't have helped but notice my wife's behavior with this fellow Smun.

VIOLET. With whom?

WHEELER. (*Impatiently*) With this Smun!

VIOLET. (*Frowning*) Who?

WHEELER. Clarence. Clarence Smun.

VIOLET. But his name isn't "Smun."

WHEELER. Yes. S-M-U-N Smun.

VIOLET. No. His name's Moon. M-double O-N Moon. Clarence Moon.

WHEELER. (*Annoyed*) Oh, but I *know*. My secretary took his name when he applied in my office. I'm not quite such an idiot as to put a man in my house and not even know his *name*! It's Smun.

VIOLET. Have you ever spoken to him by that name? Calling him "Mr. Smun," I mean?

WHEELER. (*At c.*) Why, certainly! I don't know—maybe I haven't. No. Perhaps not. Bobby and Cora started in calling him Clarence, and the rest of us just dropped into that. (*Goes over to VIOLET*) But have *you* ever called him "Mr. Moon?"

VIOLET. (*A little consciously*) I believe I've just called him "you."

WHEELER. I thought so! It's Smun. I may be in a bad state of nerves, but at least I know a name of four letters when I see it!

VIOLET. (*Skeptically*) Did he write it for you?

WHEELER. No! But Mrs. Martyn *did*!

VIOLET. (*Coldly*) Oh, she was mistaken.

WHEELER. (*Emphatically*) Mrs. Martyn is *never* mistaken!

VIOLET. (*With serene doggedness*) His name's Moon, though!

WHEELER. (*Sharply*) I really don't see what's the use of being so obstinate about it!

VIOLET. (*Offended*) Mr. Wheeler!

WHEELER. (*With a flinging out of hands, he swings away from her*) Oh, well; good gracious, what's the good of quarreling about a thing like that? It is *Smun*! (*Turns up.*)

(BOBBY enters up c.)

VIOLET. (*Shaking her head slightly*) No. Moon.

WHEELER. (*Whirling upon her*) I said—

(Checks himself, his mouth open. He sees BOBBY)
I asked you——

(BOBBY passing up; WHEELER calls to him.)

BOBBY. (Reprovingly) Look; you said, "Step out a moment." (Going off.)

WHEELER. Wait a minute. (BOBBY comes in)
What do you understand Clarence's name to be?

BOBBY. (With suspicion that either he is being insulted or his father is becoming an idiot) What do I understand Clarence's name to be?

WHEELER. (Testily) That's what I asked you!

BOBBY. (In the same state of mind, testily) Why, what do you mean, asking me such a question?

WHEELER. (Angrily) What?

BOBBY. (A light striking him) Oh, you mean his last name?

WHEELER. (Savagely) I do! Do you know it?

BOBBY. (With dignified asperity) Cert'nly I know it. His name's Clarence Smart.

VIOLET. (With a quiet triumph) I told you it wasn't "Smun." It's Moon.

WHEELER. (Turning up, despairing of everything) Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

BOBBY. (Mildly) His last name's Smart, Violet.

VIOLET. No. It's Moon.

(CORA sings off L.)

BOBBY. (Surprised) Oh, is it? Well—all right. It's Moon. (Sits philosophically. WHEELER turns and stares at him.)

READY BELL

VIOLET. (CORA enters c., still humming, starts to exit up R.) Well? What about him?

BOBBY. Well, in the first place——

WHEELER. (*Up c.*) Wait. (*Frowning*) Cora. (*He comes down.*)

CORA. (*Halting at door*) Whatcha want, Papa?

WHEELER. What is Clarence's last name?

CORA. (*Preoccupied, but the slightest bit surprised*) Clarence? I never thought of his having one. (*Begins to hum again and exits R., still much preoccupied.*)

BOBBY. (*Mildly explaining*) You see, she hasn't got any sense.

BELL

WHEELER. (*Almost moaning*) Perhaps we might agree to continue to speak of him just as "Clarence." The important thing is to—— (*He breaks off as DINWIDDIE enters R. WHEELER looks at him in frowning inquiry.*)

DINWIDDIE. (*Not stopping, crossing to L.C.*) Door, sir.

WHEELER. Not at home. (*DINWIDDIE starts out R. Front of WHEELER, back of VIOLET*) Dinwiddie? (*DINWIDDIE turns*) You distribute the mail in the house; you've seen Smun's letters——

DINWIDDIE. Whose, sir?

WHEELER. (*Goes up to DINWIDDIE—testily*) Clarence's! How is his last name spelled on the letters that come for him?

DINWIDDIE. There haven't any come for him since he's been here, sir.

WHEELER. All right.

DINWIDDIE. Yes, sir.

(*Exit up c. to R.*)

WHEELER. (*At L.C. Going on rather irritably*) Been here three weeks and hasn't had a letter; that's pretty queer!

BOBBY. Well, yes!

WHEELER. I'm willing to waive his *name*, though, of course, it is Smun.

VIOLET. (*Rises—interrupting*) But, Mr. Wheeler, *nobody's* name ever was "Smun."

WHEELER. It happens *his* is. Mrs. Martyn—

VIOLET. There isn't such a name. It's Moon.

WHEELER. (*Gulping down a sharp expostulation*) Well, let's get to what has to be *done* about him! I don't like this three weeks without a letter. A young man of that sort gets letters. It looks as if he'd taken measure *not* to get 'em.

BOBBY. Well, you *brought* him here, Father.

WHEELER. (*At c.*) All of us have our foolish day *sometime*, when we do the thing we've never before. *Afterwards* it was so embarrassing to ask him questions about himself that I've put it off from day to day. I won't put it off *now*! (*Enter DINWIDDIE from R.*) What do you want? (*This is to DINWIDDIE.*)

DINWIDDIE. It's Mr. Hubert Stem, sir. He asked for you, sir.

WHEELER. (*Sharply*) What!

VIOLET. I made it clear to him this afternoon, Mr. Wheeler, that if he came here again, *you* would see him.

DINWIDDIE. That's what he said, sir, when I told him "Not at home."

WHEELER. (*Sharply, as if to go out R.*) Is Miss Cora out there?

DINWIDDIE. No, sir; she's upstairs.

WHEELER. (*Grimly breathing hard*) Tell him to come in. (*Exit DINWIDDIE R.*) I'll finish *this* one first! Just— (*Goes up c.*) Please, Miss Pinney—

(*He motions to them to go up; and they do as STEM enters R. He is in dinner clothes and overcoat, no hat and is repressing some excitement. DINWIDDIE closes the door without entering. BOBBY goes up on veranda.*)

WHEELER. Now, Mr. Stem—

STEM. (*Quickly as he enters*) Now, wait, Mr. Wheeler, before you say anything you'll be sorry for!

WHEELER. (*Grimly*) Then perhaps you'd better speak quickly, Mr. Stem.

(STEM comes down.)

STEM. (*Quickly, earnestly*) I came here to do your family a service. (*Enter CORA R.*) I know—

WHEELER. (*Sharply*) Wait, if you please.

(CORA is heard for an instant humming R. The same song. She is carrying CLARENCE'S saxophone. Seeing nobody, she goes rhythmically with her humming to up C. Suggests, merely, a dance thought accompanying the air.)

BOBBY. (*At L.C. on platform. Seriously and significantly*) Cora, don't you see Mr. Stem?

CORA. (*Not stopping, glances back at STEM with an utterly blank semi-circular sweep of her eye, speaks in an absent monotone*) Howja do. (*Instantly humming again, exits gaily up C. Short pause.*)

BOBBY. (*Plaintively*) Well, that's the way they are, sometimes!

WHEELER. (*Sternly to STEM*) Go on, sir, if you please.

STEM. I'm going to be brutally frank. I want first to apologize for my thoughtlessness about Miss Wheeler. I know she's not "out" and I did get her to do a rather absurd thing, but it was my only way to force another lady to pay some attention to my existence. I mean Miss Pinney.

WHEELER. (*Incredulous*) Miss Pinney?

VIOLET. You couldn't leave me out of it?

STEM. No. (*To WHEELER*) I tell you candidly I'm here now on Miss Pinney's account. The only reason I've *ever* been here is on Miss Pinney's account.

BOBBY. (*Coming down to R. of STEM. Severely*) Look here! *This is serious!*

VIOLET. (*Looking all the while at STEM*) Mr. Stem knows that I've always been unable to like him: he's not very pleasant in the means he uses to "force" my "attention to his existence."

WHEELER. (*To STEM, impatiently*) What do you want to say?

STEM. When I saw her this afternoon, there was a very unattractive young man in a soldier's uniform drumming on the piano here.

WHEELER. Well, what about him?

STEM. I'm sorry to say I thought Miss Pinney seemed quite—under his spell. (*VIOLET laughs*) Since then I've made some inquiries about him. (*VIOLET laughs again.*)

WHEELER. How?

STEM. (*Smiling faintly*) Well, for one thing, my servants know yours.

WHEELER. Well?

STEM. If yours know the facts—and I think they do—you brought this man here without knowing anything whatever about him.

WHEELER. (*Grimly*) Well, we know his *name*. It's Clarence Smun.

VIOLET. Mr. Wheeler, will you ask him, himself?

WHEELER. I decline! Have a man three weeks in my house and then go up and ask his *name*?

VIOLET. It's Clarence Moon.

STEM. Oh, no. I think you'll find it's not even Clarence.

VIOLET. What nonsense!

STEM. Is it? (*To WHEELER*) He said he drove mules, and he wears the uniform of a private in the Quartermaster's Department, doesn't he? (*Taking a newspaper from his pocket.*)

WHEELER. Yes. He did.

STEM. He's been here three weeks.

WHEELER. Just about.

STEM. (*Opening the paper*) "Charles Short, wagoner in the Quartermaster's Department. Deserted three weeks ago, sought both by War Department and divorced wife seeking alimony. Also wanted in Delaware." There's his picture.

WHEELER. But it doesn't *look* like him.

STEM. (*Promptly*) Newspaper pictures never *do*. I got the idea as soon as I saw it. It looks *something* like him.

VIOLET. (*Taking the paper*) More like me! It might *just* as well be my picture! (*Then with great earnestness*) What an *awful* fool you are! (*She hands paper to BOBBY who looks at it.*)

WARNING FOR SINGING OFF STAGE

STEM. (*Angrily triumphant*) There! That's *one* thing I wanted to find out!

VIOLET. What is?

STEM. How much interest you *do* take in him!

VIOLET. (*Contemptuously*) As a matter of fact I'm extremely *uninterested* in him! (*Turns to window. Indignantly.*)

BOBBY. (*Pleased. Following VIOLET up to window*) Are you, Violet? (*Turns to VIOLET.*)

STEM. (*Sharply, crosses to WHEELER*) Mr. Wheeler, have you any objection to my asking him pointblank if he's this Charles Short?

WHEELER. (*Profoundly annoyed by everything, pacing the floor*) Oh, ask him, ask him! Pointblank or any other way! We've got to do *something* about him!

STEM. (*Decisively*) I'll do it! (*VIOLET laughs; he turns to her, expostulating*) Wait till you hear what he says: Watch to see if he doesn't quibble. (*Going up*) Is he out there? I'll ask him now.

SINGING

BOBBY. (*Goes up c., looking L.*) You can't now. Listen: It's terrible.

(*The saxophone and an alto and soprano are heard off L. in the air CORA has been humming. The effect is not bad, but fails to please those in room. WHEELER paces. VIOLET R.C. STEM stands R.C.*)

BOBBY. (*With feeling*) Why, I haven't heard Mama even try to sing for anyway four or five years, have you, Papa?

WHEELER. (*Halting*) No; I haven't. (*His frown deepens.*)

BOBBY. It might be kind of—better, if Cora wouldn't—they must feel terribly happy to be able to stand makin' sounds like those!

WHEELER. (*Waving toward him angrily*) It's gone far enough! Tell them to come in here.

BOBBY. (*Shouting to off L.*) Hey! Take a rest! Quit! Come in here! Papa wants you to come in here! (*Music stops*) Yes, he does! Yes! In here!

(*Laughing voices are heard off up L., then CORA appears up c., still wearing her wrap, carrying the saxophone affectionately. CLARENCE follows, his coat closed over his chest, the collar turned up. MRS. WHEELER clings happily to his arm; she has a fur wrap about her. STEM goes down R. VIOLET to piano, WHEELER above table.*)

CORA. (*As she comes*) You want us to come in?
(*As in dreamy surprise.*)

MRS. W. (*Smiling brightly. Passes CORA*)
Howdy'do, Mr. Stem? (*To WHEELER, mildly surprised*) Did you want us? Miss Pinney's here.
(*Crosses down to c. She relinquishes CLARENCE'S arm, coming down, letting her wrap fall to her arm*)
Do hope our little operetta didn't disturb——

WHEELER. Never mind, Fanny! Mr. Stem has a question he wants to ask, I believe.

MRS. W. (*Frowning, amused*) Of me?

STEM. (*Nervously, but sharply, pointing to CLARENCE, who is up R.C. with CORA*) No. Of that person there!

CLARENCE. (*Surprised, pausing as he turns down his collar*) Of this person? (*Comes down.*)

STEM. (*Loudly*) Yes, sir! You!

CLARENCE. (*Puzzled, coming down, CORA following him*) You wanted to ask me about something?

(*CORA halts when he does, the saxophone in her arms, her eyes always fixed upon him.*)

STEM. (*Sharply. BOBBY crosses to L.*) I wanted to ask you a simple, direct question. I see you've left off your uniform since this afternoon.

CLARENCE. Why, that isn't a simple, direct question. It isn't a question at all. It's an observation.

STEM. (*Exasperated*) I'm coming to my question, but first I want to know: Didn't you leave off your uniform after the arrival of this evening's paper?

CLARENCE. (*With some indignation*) No. I left off my uniform after the arrival of my other clothes.

STEM. (*Angrily*) Isn't that quibbling?

CLARENCE. Why, do you dress by the paper?

STEM. (*Fiercely*) My question is simply and plainly this: Did you ever hear the name of Charles Short?

CLARENCE. (*Quickly*) Charles Short? Yes.

STEM. (*Approaching a triumph*) Do you know anybody by the name of Charles Short?

CLARENCE. Of course I do.

STEM. (*Crescendo*) Do you know anybody by the name of Charles Short *well*?

CLARENCE. Charles Shortwell? I do not.

STEM. But you *do* know a person named Charles Short?

CLARENCE. Yes. Don't you? What do you mean? *Everybody* knows somebody named Charlie Short!

STEM. (*Loudly, and gesticulating like a lawyer*) I'm talking about the one *you* know!

CLARENCE. (*Quickly*) I know three!

STEM. (*Furious*) I mean the one we're talking about!

CLARENCE. Well, good heavens, my dear sir, which one of them *are* we talking about? *I'm* not talking about any of 'em. If you want to ask me a simple, direct question about somebody named Charlie Short, surely you ought to be able to say something more about him than that he's the one we're talking about.

STEM. More quibbles! Quibbles!

CLARENCE. "Quibbles?" I'm trying if possible to reach your mind! It seems you think we have a mutual acquaintance named Charlie Short and you want to find out something about him from *me*, and you immediately proceed to lose your temper because your own powers of description are too limited for you to tell me which of the three *I* know is the one *you* know!

CORA. (*In a breath, with dreamy enthusiasm. Comes down*) Clarence, that's the most wonderful

logic! Let's go out on the porch and play some more: this is "awf'ly tedious."

MRS. W. (*About to rise from where she sits near table*) Let's do!

WHEELER. (*Loudly, angrily*) No! We'll finish this!

STEM. I'll tell you which Charles Short I mean: I mean the one that was in the army!

CLARENCE. (*Despairing of him, plaintively to the others*) We had four million men in the American Army: I suppose he'd—(*Meaning STEM*)—think it singular if I told him that so far as I can guess probably all three of the Charles Shorts I know either enlisted or got drafted!

STEM. (*Loudly*) I claim his evasions are more and more suspicious! (*Crosses to table, picks up paper. Seizing it and thrusting it under CLARENCE'S eyes, slapping it*) THIS is the Charles Short I mean! Charles Short, deserter! (*Goes and gets paper.*)

CLARENCE. Oh, that's the one you know? Charles Short, deserter?

STEM. I ask the pointblank question, yes or no. **DO YOU KNOW HIM?**

CORA. (*On this, plaintively*) Clarence, won't you play just *once* more? This is getting so *tedious!*

(*Her voice rises high in complaint on the last word.*

STEM *is in despair at the interruption. CLARENCE looks at her. STEM goes down c. disgusted.*)

STEM. (*His own voice strained*) I say I want to know——

CLARENCE. (*Turning his head from CORA to look at the paper, which he has taken*) You want to know if I know this one? (*Turning to look at*

STEM) They were *all* homely. Was the one you knew——

STEM. I say do you know that face?

CLARENCE. It could just as well be a picture of *me* as anyone else. (STEM *looks at* WHEELER) Or Mr. Wheeler, or you.

STEM. (*Ominously, shaking his head*) No. That's not a picture of me! Or of Mr. Wheeler!

CLARENCE. It *could* be, I said. Of course, it *isn't*, because evidently it's a picture of the Short that you know: at least, I suppose you do! (*Exasperated*) What *is* it about him? What do you want to know about him? Why in the world do you ask *me* about him?

VIOLET. (*Rises, comes to up c.*) Let ME tell you. In the first place, they want to know if you know him.

CLARENCE. (*Despairingly*) I've been able to—gather that much from Mr. Stem! How on earth could a person tell if he knew another person from a picture like *that*?

VIOLET. You couldn't, but——

CLARENCE. (*Going on*) And what about it if I *did* know him? What do they want me to *do* about him?

VIOLET. They think you *are* this Charles Short!

CLARENCE. They what? They think *I* am this Charles Short?

VIOLET. (*Sharply*) Yes. Mr. Stem does!

CLARENCE. Do *you* think 'so? You seemed to think a lot of other things—do you——

WARNING FOR CURTAIN

VIOLET. (*Sharply*) Yes. I think the other things, but I don't think this one!

CLARENCE. I'd rather have you think this one and not the others.

STEM. (*Vehemently*) Aren't you *this Charles Short?*

CLARENCE. (*Violently*) Let me get *this* straight. You want to know whether I know *this* Charles Short and then, whether I know him or not, you want to know whether I *am* this Charles Short and *not* one of the other two Charles Shorts? Is *that* what you mean?

STEM. (*Fiercely*) I want to know——

CLARENCE. (*Cutting him off fiercely*) Well, I'll answer you: *No!* I'm not this Charles Short! I'm not this one here in the paper, understand! About my being either of the other two, or both of 'em, I won't commit myself, but I'm not *this* one!

STEM. (*Furiously*) Isn't that quibbling, Mr. Wheeler?

CLARENCE. (*Turning sharply on WHEELER*) Does Mr. Wheeler think—— (*Incredulously to him*) Have you been sharing Mr. Stem's suspicions as to his friend, this Mr. Charles Short?

WHEELER. (*Emphatically*) I have not. It might have been possible, so I let him ask you. I'm glad it came up, because we certainly need to know more about you than we do. We need to know just *who you are!*

CLARENCE. (*Incredulous*) You need to know who I *am!* Why, I supposed you *did* know from the time I gave my name to Mrs. Martyn in your office!

WHEELER. (*Vehemently*) Well, I didn't! We don't know anything about you!

CLARENCE. (*In an equally vehement tone*) Why, good heavens, all you had to do was to look me up in the last edition of "Who's Who"—I don't mean that I'm a great man, but I certainly *am* one of the authorities on the coleoptera!

WHEELER. (*Angrily*) On the *what?*

(DINWIDDIE enters L., stands there.)

CLARENCE. (*Shouting*) On the COLEOPTERA!

DINWIDDIE. (*Sharply and quickly, in one breath*) The hot water plant's busted again and no plumbers. Mister Clair'nce, if you don't come and fix it the house'll be flooded with ice-water. It's an eight-hour job. I'll lend ye some overalls. (*Exit DINWIDDIE.*)

(*CLARENCE strides to up R. VIOLET drops back to down R.C.*)

CORA. (*Plaintively*) Clarence, couldn't you play just *once* more?

CLARENCE. (*At door L.*) No, I'm afraid I can't! Not for eight hours!

(*Exit CLARENCE L., DINWIDDIE following him. MRS. WHEELER stands looking after him wistfully, but CORA, close to her, sits sorrowfully upon the floor as he says "eight hours." VIOLET exits R. simultaneously when CLARENCE exits L. They look across at each other just before.*)

BOBBY. (*Coming down importantly*) Well, wha'daya *think* about it, Father? Don'cha think he's prob'ly crazy?

WHEELER. (*Sweeping him away with a gesture, exasperated and perplexed beyond measure*) I don't know! Go get me a dictionary! And a copy of 'Who's Who'!

(*Begins to pace the floor, BOBBY going up c. MRS. WHEELER and CORA R.C.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE: *The same. The curtains of the sun-room have been pulled back, showing a bright morning outdoors. In the sun-room are: CORA, in pretty "country clothes" for autumn, but not wearing a hat; and MRS. WHEELER in a becoming morning negligee. They sit, examining with interest some large books, turning the pages;—other books, including a new "Who's Who," are on a table near them. WHEELER enters R. (The doors there being open) He wears the same clothes shown in Act I and II and glasses; has "Sun" and "Times." He is going to sit in the sun-room and read; but halts upon seeing MRS. WHEELER, on couch L. He doesn't see CORA at R. of steps.*

MRS. WHEELER. *(Pleasantly)* Good-morning, Henry! *(Nods smilingly)* I hope you slept well? *(Looks again at her book; exchanging it for another; CORA doing the same.)*

WHEELER. *(Gravely)* Thanks. *(Goes to settee by piano.)*

MRS. WHEELER. I told 'em not to put too much sugar on your grape-fruit again. Was your breakfast all right?

WHEELER. Thanks. It's quite surprising.

MRS. W. *(Looking at her book)* What is?

WHEELER. *(Gravely)* Your being so—amiable.

MRS. W. *(Indulgently)* You mean in the morning?



WHEELER. (*Casually*) Yes—or evening. (*Sits by piano on settee R.C., lifting one of the papers to read.*)

MRS. W. (*Amiably*) Oh, we're all cheerful now. (*Sits L.C.*) Isn't Miss Pinney down yet?

WHEELER. (*Quietly*) I don't know. Is—Clarence?

MRS. W. No. Dinwiddie says the poor boy didn't go to bed till after four—but he kept at it till he got that dreadful heating plant repaired—!

CORA. (*Dreamily, at back*) Isn't he wonderful?

WHEELER. (*Mutteringly*) Oh, are you there, Cora? I didn't see you.

MRS. W. I thought you didn't.

CORA. (*Alluding to book*) This is "Bon-Con," Mamma. There's nothing that sounds (*Comes down*) like it here. It couldn't be Coaling Stations of course? You don't think it was Coaling Stations he said, do you? I know it was coal-something, wasn't it, Papa?

WHEELER. (*Gruffly*) Wasn't *what* "coal something?"

CORA. What Clarence said.

WHEELER. (*Touched on a sore spot*) I don't know and I don't care to know. (*Reading his paper again.*)

CORA. (*Coming down, carrying a large book. Crosses to WHEELER*) Yes, Papa; you know when he said last night he was one of the authorities on coal-something and you sent Bobby for the dictionary and got so mad because by the time he came back with it you couldn't remember this coal-something-word to look it up; so you couldn't, and went off to bed with a headache powder. It was coal-something, wasn't it, because you can remember anyhow *that* much, *can't* you, Papa?

WHEELER. No. I cannot; and I don't care to!

CORA. (*Going back to the sun-room*) Well, I

know it *was*. (*Plaintively*) But the encyclopedia's absootly more than useless whenever you need it the most. You can't get any help out of it at *all* unless you know just what you want to look up! (*Goes up and gets "Who's Who"*) I'd have willingly gone and asked Clarence last night while he was working in the cellar, only you wouldn't let me.

MRS. W. (*Pleasantly*) I don't just see why you couldn't have asked him yourself, Henry.

WHEELER. (*Irascibly*) Don't you? I suppose you think I'm so ridiculous already I needn't have minded making myself more so!

MRS. W. (*Soothingly*) But I don't see the ridiculousness——

WHEELER. You don't see the ridiculousness of going down in the cellar to ask a man you've been badgering and who's repairing a heating plant for you—to ask him what a word was that he'd already told you *twice*!

CORA. (*Comes down c. with book*) Well, you couldn't sit up till four o'clock to ask him; at least, Miss Pinney wouldn't let me. (*Emphasizing the last two words*) How *could* you be so absurd as to think Clarence's name was "Smun," Papa?

MRS. W. (*Quietly reproving*) Your father's always accurate, Cora.

(*WHEELER stares at her, and sits again.*)

CORA. Well, so's Violet. *She* heard him give his name in the office and she says it's Moon.

MRS. W. (*Absently*) Hush! Your father's right, of course.

CORA. (*Putting her book on the table*) There's a whole book on Coal in the library. I'M goin' to get it. (*Runs off L.*)

WHEELER. (*Rises—crosses to table for paper*) Do you mind being quite frank? Why have you suddenly become so amiable with me?

MRS. W. (*Smilingly*) Don't you think anybody can be amiable if she can find even just one pleasant thing to think about—at home? I suppose we all need—*something!*

WHEELER. (*Frowning*) Yes. There's one pleasant thing *I* think about *you*, Fanny.

MRS. W. (*Amiably*) You've *found* one?

WHEELER. I mean to say; you're not obstinate—about names, for instance—

MRS. W. (*Lightly but seriously*) Oh, no. I only think of what he *is*.

WHEELER. (*Striking his paper impatiently*) "What he *is*?" You can't! We don't know any more about that than we did before I questioned him!

MRS. W. (*Pleasantly*) "Questioned him?" Why, you didn't even ask him his name!

WHEELER. (*Breaking out*) My Lord, do you suppose I could have a man in my house three weeks and then ask him his *name*? His name's Smun.

MRS. W. (*Indulgently*) There isn't any "Smun" in "Who's Who." Or any "Clarence Moon" either.

WHEELER. I didn't *expect* to find him in Who's Who! You don't suppose anybody in "Who's Who" would have been looking for a job the way he— (*Louder with the new thought*) Why hasn't he had any letters since he's been here?

MRS. W. (*Casually, as she looks in a book*) Probably because he hasn't written to anybody. (*Struck by this idea, and annoyed by it, WHEELER rubs his head. Going on absently*) That usually is the way, isn't it?

WHEELER. (*Mumbling*) I dunno! I dunno! (*Reads again*)

(CORA enters L., bringing another book.)

CORA. (*As she comes in*) I've almost remembered what he said: it was something like "coal and



W. S. Van Dyke
1917

SCENE FROM 'CLARENCE, ACT IV



potteries"—I'm sure there was something about potteries in it. (*She is at table*) Don't you think there was something like "potteries" in it, Papa?

WHEELER. (*Almost shouting*) I don't know!

CORA. Well, Violet didn't know, herself, and she's supposed to tutor me in *French* an' ev'rything—so it *can't* be anything in *French* or anything. *That* makes it seem as if it might be coal and potteries, doesn't it?

(BOBBY enters from L., dressed as in Act II. He speaks briskly as he enters.)

BOBBY. Well, have you found out what he was talkin' about yet? (WHEELER utters a sound of exasperation, rises and goes up, taking his papers with him. Goes round R. of table and up into Sun-Room. BOBBY enters L. Going on) I don't think it was a word myself. Look! I think it was just somep'n he made up, because, listen, if it was a word, why *Father'd* of known it. (WHEELER gives him a look and goes out up L. garden quickly. BOBBY looks after him) Listen! I wonder what makes him so nervous?

MRS. W. (*Thoughtfully*) Maybe we all do. (*She goes quietly out up c. to L. garden after WHEELER.*)

BOBBY. You don't suppose she means his fam'ly upsets him.

CORA. (*Goes up c. with a book. To BOBBY, virtuously reprovng*) I guess she means the behavior of some o' the fam'ly does! (VIOLET enters R., dressed as in Act I, but without a wrap. She wears a hat. CORA doesn't pause. BOBBY doesn't see VIOLET, goes up c.) You wouldn't even let him read his paper in peace an' quiet.

BOBBY. (*Indignantly*) Me! Why, it was you! I'm goin' to ask him. (*Going L.*) Papa, wasn't it Cora that—

CORA. (*Going L.*) I'll ask him first! Papa wasn't it Bobby that——

(*They go out angrily up L., clamoring together. Exit C. to L., then cross to R.*).

"Papa, wasn't it (CORA) (BOBBY) that disturbed you?" (*WHEELER'S voice is heard loudly protesting off L., but not his words, and a moment later CORA and BOBBY return, retreating across the sun-room from up L. to up R. in serious discomfiture, talking loudly, simultaneously, not pausing.*) What Bobby says is: "'Twas your fault! Never heard him speak like that before! C'm out 'n the yard!" What Cora says is: "Well, I never was so insulted by my own father in my life! (*Both these speeches are finished off R. DELLA enters R.—carrying a small "vacuum cleaner" just as the two are crossing. VIOLET goes up and looks after them; then off L. thoughtfully.*)

WHEELER. (*Off*) Oh, damn it—let me alone!

DELLA. (*R. benevolently, alluding to R.*) He's eatin'.

VIOLET. What? (*Comes down part way.*)

DELLA. He's eatin' his breakfast; one cup coffee; one slice toast. Never nothin' more. It on'y takes um a minute an' three-quahters; he's a comfortin' man to have in a house. Now he's through. Jist like that.

(*VIOLET goes up, looking at the books. CLARENCE enters R., dressed as in the latter part of the second act.*)

CLARENCE. (*Cheerfully*) Good morning, Miss Pinney. (*DELLA stops and turns. She nods, not looking fully at him*) Good morning, Della.

DELLA. (*Half amused, half languishingly*) Good

mornin', Mister Clar'nce. (*Goes L. as on reluctant duty. Looking back.*)

CLARENCE. Oh—Della—

DELLA. Yes? Yes, sir?

CLARENCE. Ah—did you understand me to say that before I was in the army I'd been employed in a—wash-room—in a hotel?

DELLA. You didn't say in a hotel, sir, but I knew you'd never 'a' been contented wit' less. You says in a lavatory, sir.

CLARENCE. Oh! (*Gravely*) Well, I'd have done as well as I could in a position in a lavatory, I hope; but what I said was "laboratory."

DELLA. (*Matter-of-course*) Yes, sir. What is the difference, sir?

CLARENCE. Well, in a laboratory you have to do some work.

DELLA. (*Commiserating him*) Trust you for findin' the hard jobs, Mister Clair'nce.

CLARENCE. Thank you, Della.

DELLA. (*Gently*) Yes, sir.

(*Exits C. to L. with the vacuum cleaner. CLARENCE crosses over to look at VIOLET. VIOLET comes down.*)

CLARENCE. (*Alluding to VIOLET's hat*) Are you going out this morning? So am I.

VIOLET. (*Quietly, rather coldly*) I'm going away, this morning.

CLARENCE. (*Going nearer her*) "Going away this morning." So am I. That's peculiar.

VIOLET. (*Drily, with a glance at him and away*) Yes, it would be, if you were going! I'm afraid you'd have it take—several—people with you! (*Looking away from him*) Why do you think of going?

CLARENCE. "Why?" Don't you think for an em-

ployee to remain in a position a certain amount of connivance on the part of his employer is almost a necessity?

VIOLET. But *Mrs. Wheeler* won't let you go.

CLARENCE. I know the repartee for that, but—

VIOLET. (*Interrupting quickly*) *Mr. Wheeler* won't let *me*. (*With a slight laugh*) Don't fear; we had the most absurd argument over a foolish point last night and—well, I'm sure he thinks me outrageously feminine!

CLARENCE. What was the foolish point?

VIOLET. It was too foolish to tell you. (*Comes down a little. Both speak seriously.*)

CLARENCE. (*Frowning*) Well, I suppose the important thing is that we're both going away—and don't know where. You've never told me. Haven't you got any father or mother or anything?

VIOLET. (*Not gloomily*) No. I've got a second cousin in Belfast—I've never met him.

CLARENCE. I've got an aunt—in Honolulu. She used to write to me for money sometimes. I don't believe she'd be much help.

VIOLET. Not in an emergency, I should think.

CLARENCE. (*Cheerfully*) Yes—we—seem to have an emergency.

VIOLET. (*Looking up at him*) "We?" I'm simply going in town to an agency and wait till they find something for me.

CLARENCE. Suppose your—funds—didn't hold out till they did?

VIOLET. Oh, but they *will!* (*She means they must.*)

CLARENCE. Mine wouldn't. I wonder if Della happens to *know* of a good hotel where they need—

VIOLET. (*Sincerely*) I have a full month's check; paid this morning. I'll lend you half of it till you find out.

CLARENCE. (*Stares at her; then speaks rather huskily*) You will?

VIOLET. (*Quietly*) Why, of course.

CLARENCE. Be careful; I might do something queer!

VIOLET. (*With dry naïveté*) "Be careful"—of my money?

CLARENCE. No. Be careful now. Of talking about lending me half of it.

VIOLET. Don't you suppose I meant it?

CLARENCE. Yes. That's why I might do something queer. (*She looks up at him in increasing puzzlement.*)

VIOLET. Queer? (*Turns a little.*)

CLARENCE. (*Profoundly in earnest*) Don't worry. I'm all right again. There's something I want to tell you. It's about myself. I don't believe I've mentioned it. I *have* mentioned a lot of things about myself—

VIOLET. Well, not a "lot"—but—some.

CLARENCE. Nothing's so stupid as a man going about telling everyone all about his private affairs—I'm afraid I talk about myself too much altogether. Of course, it was disgustingly conceited on my part to think Mr. Wheeler had looked me up—but wasn't it natural to think he'd do that when Mrs. Martyn had my *name*? I suppose I often forget I'm a specialist and that business men, of *course*, don't know much about such people as entomologists.

VIOLET. (*Not knowing, herself*) I—suppose they—don't.

CLARENCE. (*Going on with an enthusiasm that increases*) On the other hand, doesn't it seem strange they don't? My subject is of the most august proportions in the world. The coleoptera are the largest division of the animal kingdom. They outnumber mere human beings by billions of billions.

Not held in check they would sweep the whole of mankind from the earth like a breath!

VIOLET. They would?

CLARENCE. (*Going on with still greater spirit and enthusiasm*) I say I am an expert on them; that only means I know most of the little we know about them: our ignorance is still of the dark ages! Mr. Wheeler is an expert on dollars. Anybody can know *all about* dollars. Put all the wealth of all the nations together and you get a sum that can be spoken in hundreds of billions, whereas the coleoptera consist of *eighty-thousand species* and the population of a *single one* of those eighty thousand species alone outnumbers the dollars of all the nations of the earth as stupendously as the dollars of those nations outnumber the dollars in Mr. Wheeler's pocket! No, no; there's no reason for *him* to feel superior. No, no, indeed! *Nobody* need set up to be snobbish about *beetles!*

VIOLET. (*Startled*) Beetles! Are the co-coleoptera—are they just *beetles?*

CLARENCE. (*Amazed*) Why! Didn't you *know?*

VIOLET. I—I don't believe many people—do.

CLARENCE. No. I suppose they don't. Each man to his trade—I've heard a politician get as excited about politics—or a minister about his congregation—as I do about the coleoptera! You wouldn't believe it, but—

VIOLET. (*Interrupting*) Yes, I believe it. I believe everything you say—but you said you wanted to tell me something about your private affairs. You didn't mean the co-leoptera, did you?

CLARENCE. (*Remembering*) Yes; in a way their affairs are mine. What I wanted to tell you is that it's possible we sha'n't need to worry about money.

VIOLET. (*Frowning*) Possible that "*we*" sha'n't?

CLARENCE. We *might* not, after this morning's

mail. You see, before the war I was on potato-bugs——

VIOLET. (*Disturbed*) You were?

CLARENCE. Oh, yes; I was a *long* time on potato-bugs.

VIOLET. Are *they* co-le-op——

CLARENCE. Absolutely. You see, by finding their worst enemies——

VIOLET. Enemies? You mean people that hate potato-bugs?

CLARENCE. No! Other *bugs* that hate 'em. At least they don't get on with them. The enemies are altogether too much for the potato-bugs, you see; and by getting the potato-bugs and their enemies *together*, of course you save the potatoes.

VIOLET. But I should think their enemies might——

CLARENCE. No. Their enemies don't like potatoes.

VIOLET. (*Sincerely*) How strange!

CLARENCE. (*Enthusiastically*) It's one of the most fortunate things in the world! If they *both* liked 'em there wouldn't be any potatoes. Now, the potato-bug—— (*As if lecturing.*)

VIOLET. (*Interrupting*) But surely this isn't what you wanted to tell me about *yourself*?

CLARENCE. Yes, it is. (*In the same tone as before*) Now, the potato-bug—the potato-bug has several acknowledged authorities, and I was one of 'em.

VIOLET. (*Nodding*) Of course.

CLARENCE. My assistant was even more so! *I'm* more a general authority; he's all potato-bug; he's spent *sixteen years* on potato-bugs; and he's the oldest potato-bug man in the world to-day! He is! He's a good general bug man, too, a fine all-round bug man, but when it comes to potato-bugs, he can eat any other bug man alive!

VIOLET. (*Seriously*) He can?

CLARENCE. Yes, when I went into the army, this assistant of mine was appointed to the position I'd held; and it was what he deserved. When I got out of the army I knew if I went back there the trustees would put me in again, and he'd be dropped, so I decided it was only decent not to disturb him, but I had spent a lot of money on outside experiments, and I had to do something. However, I discovered that during a period of economic reconstruction after a world war there are extremely limited openings, for a specialist on the coleoptera.

VIOLET. (*Gently, her eyes lowered*) You had a pretty hard time——

CLARENCE. Not compared to some of the others.

VIOLET. But I understood you to say *you* might be all right if you get a letter you're expecting by this morning's mail.

CLARENCE. No. I said "we." I said we might be all right.

VIOLET. (*Genuinely perplexed*) But I don't see——

CLARENCE. Why, yes. It will all depend on the letter. You see, several days ago the papers said my assistant had been called to Washington by the Department of Agriculture and he'd accepted. So you see where that might put *us*, right away.

VIOLET. "Put us?" I don't see where it might put anything!

CLARENCE. But my *dear*——

VIOLET. (*Turning, not angrily, but disturbed of mind*) What?

CLARENCE. My dear Miss Pinney——

VIOLET. Oh! (*Meaning "Oh, I see!"*)

CLARENCE. Don't you see; that left me free to write the laboratory that I was out of the army—so I *did* write 'em yesterday, and if they think half as much of me as a coleopterist, as I do of myself,



SCENE FROM "CLARENCE, ACT III

they'll have my re-appointment in this morning's mail and we'll be all right.

VIOLET. (*Impatiently*) But "we," "we!" You keep saying "we!"

CLARENCE. Well, by that I mean us. I couldn't ask for a better salary.

VIOLET. (*Bothered, but not cross*) Oh, it's you that are going to lend money now—if your letter comes? Would you lend me—half of it?

CLARENCE. I thought probably—the best way would be—would be for you to take charge of all of it—as it comes in—and let me have what I need when I need it!

VIOLET. (*Incredulous*) You thought——

CLARENCE. Yes. Wouldn't you do that?

VIOLET. (*Turns from him, then again to him*) That's a curious speech for a man to make, when only last night I was told I was mistaken about his very name!

CLARENCE. Why, how could you have been mistaken about my name?

VIOLET. I couldn't, of course; but Mr. Wheeler thought I was. That's the "foolish point" I told you we were both disagreeable about. He thinks your name is "Smun."

CLARENCE. Why, *nobody's* name is "Smun!" It can't be!

VIOLET. That's what I told him—so often he began to hate me, I think! But he insisted "Smun" was the name you gave Mrs. Martyn.

CLARENCE. Naturally, *you* knew better.

VIOLET. Naturally! I told him what it was; but why did Mrs. Martyn tell him it was "Smun"?

CLARENCE. I suppose I must have mumbled it; people with ordinary names nearly always do.

VIOLET. I don't think your name's very "ordinary."

CLARENCE. (*Anxiously*) Don't you? People usually do, but I'm glad you don't.

VIOLET. Of course I don't.

CLARENCE. Do you think—beetles—are all right, too? At least, I hope you could enjoy them?

VIOLET. (*Seriously, not shyly*) I don't know enough about them to say.

CLARENCE. I could tell you a little; it wouldn't take long.

VIOLET. How long?

CLARENCE. About as long as I live.

VIOLET. (*Quickly*) Oh, no!

CLARENCE. (*Quickly*) You can only tell a little about beetles in a lifetime. Of course, we'd often speak of other things—or wouldn't we?

VIOLET. (*Seriously and quickly*) Why, we'd—have to.

CLARENCE. (*Quickly*) Then we will. Is your bag packed?

VIOLET. (*Breathlessly*) It's right by the door of my room.

CLARENCE. I'll get 'em both. Where's your trunk?

VIOLET. (*Gulping*) It's—ready.

CLARENCE. We'll send for it! (*Exit rapidly L.*

VIOLET sinks down in a corner of the sofa, looking dazed.)

(DINWIDDIE enters up R. in the sun-room with letters; rolled magazines and circulars on a tray; he sets this upon piano, and goes out up R. BOBBY'S voice is heard off up R. DINWIDDIE exits C. to R. garden.)

BOBBY. (*Off*) Morning mail in, Dinwiddie?

DINWIDDIE. Yes, sir, on the piano.

CORA. (*Off*) Hoop-la! (*She runs on up R. Halts in the sun-room staring L. BOBBY follows her.*)

BOBBY. (*Amazed, staring L. also*) Why, look at Father and Mamma!

CORA. I *am* looking at 'em!

BOBBY. He's got his arm around her!

CORA. (*Slowly and dreamily*) That's all Clarence's influence.

BOBBY. Well, you cert'nly have got an imagination! (*Shouting*) Hey! Papa! Morning mail's here!

CORA. (*Indignantly*) Is that your idea of what to do when you see anybody with their arm around somebody? Why couldn't you leave 'em alone? (*Coming down to piano.*)

BOBBY. I don't like to see papa gettin' so soft. (*Coming down to piano.*)

CORA. I guess he wouldn't be *your* father if he wasn't pretty impressionable!

BOBBY. (*Examining letters with her*) It's you he inherits *that from!* Here's a couple of circulars for—(*Taking it to VIOLET, speaks tenderly*)—for—you—Violet.

(*VIOLET rises and goes toward piano.*)

CORA. (*Huskily commenting*) He certainly ought to be in school. (*Almost musingly.*)

VIOLET. (*In a low, absent voice, not looking at him*) Thanks. (*Takes them absently; not opening them. He returns to the table. CORA stands near the piano with magazines. Comes and sits chair L.C., opens them. In a troubled voice*) Is there a letter there for—for Mr. Moon?

BOBBY. Who?

CORA. (*Sharply*) For Clarence! (*To VIOLET*) I think it's wonderful; all this mystery about him and the cannibals and the saxophone and everything. He's perfectly certain to turn out to belong to an old Knickerbocker millionaire family with a yacht and all the old clubs—and a valet.

BOBBY. His name's Smun!

CORA. It is not! It's Moon! (*Crosses up c.*)

BOBBY. (*Crossly*) Well, there isn't any letter here for *either* of 'em!

VIOLET. (*Gently*) Are you sure?

BOBBY. (*Calmly*) I'm always sure. (*VIOLET crosses down r.*)

CORA. (*Comes down c. to BOBBY. Looking at him with concentration*) My! I'll be sorry for the woman that marries you; you already talk just like a regular little *man*! (*Crosses to c. MRS. WHEELER enters up L.; stands in sun-room unobserved. CORA goes on*) If you want me to explain that, I'll merely mention it's meant for an insult. (*Plaintively*) I *don't* know how I live in the same house with you! (*Crosses to table*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*Amiably, coming down*) You're not going to, Cora, very long. Your father's decided on a school for you—next week.

CORA. He has? Well, if it weren't for—for just one thing—I'd say "Father's right for one!"

BOBBY. What "one thing?"

CORA. (*Gulping*) Well—it's a person.

MRS. W. (*Going to VIOLET, who rises*) Clarence has just spoken to us—out there. (*Takes her hand*) He tells us you're going. I'm *really* sorry!

BOBBY. (*Startled*) Who's going?

VIOLET. (*Gently*) I am.

BOBBY. When?

VIOLET. Why—this morning.

BOBBY. (*Gulping*) Why, when am I goin' to see you again?

VIOLET. (*Gently, gravely*) Why, whenever you like, when you have a vacation.

MRS. W. You're going, too, to-morrow, Bobby.

BOBBY. (*Dazed*) I am?

MRS. W. (*Nodding amiably*) Your father's got the school to take you back. (*Crosses to L. Enter*

WHEELER and CLARENCE, carrying hat, overcoat and gloves.)

BOBBY. (*His voice breaking*) He did? (*CORA giggles irrepressibly. He whirls fiercely upon her*) You hush up! (*She dodges him gaily; he sinks morbidly into a chair.*)

CORA. (*Merrily taunting*) Oh, Bobby!

WHEELER. Miss Pinney . . .

VIOLET. Yes, Mr. Wheeler?

WHEELER. Clarence has just told me you've decided—you've both decided—on taking a step much more important than merely leaving this house.

(CLARENCE comes down.)

CORA. (*Mystified but not troubled*) What's papa talking about? (*She is by the table.*)

VIOLET. (*Troubled to WHEELER*) I'm afraid part of his plan may have to—be postponed.

CLARENCE. If any part of my plan is postponed, it won't be *that* part of it!

VIOLET. (*Troubled*) Your letter—didn't come.

CLARENCE. (*Dismayed*) It didn't? (*Turning up a little to the table*) Why, it had to!

CORA. (*Shaking her head—goes up to piano*) No. There wasn't any letter for you, Clarence. There were two for Violet and some magazines and circulars, and all the rest is for papa and mamma.

CLARENCE. But it's *got* to be there.

CORA. No. That's all there is; there isn't a single solitary other letter except just this one that'll have to be sent to the Dead Letter Office because it's addressed to somebody that doesn't live here at all. It's addressed "C. Smith, Esquire," care of papa.

CLARENCE. But, good heavens, that's *it*!

CORA. (*Loudly*) What!

CLARENCE. (*Taking it*) "C. Smith," Clarence

Smith;—of course it's it! You gave me a fright!
(There is a general exclamation of profound amazement. CORA immediately runs up to table for "Who's Who.")

WHEELER. *Smith?* Clarence Smith!

VIOLET. *(Dazed)* "Smith!"

(She whispers the words, staring front; her mouth remains open as she sinks into a settee. CLARENCE is seriously occupied reading the letter. CORA comes down to the table with "Who's Who," rapidly turning the pages.)

CORA. It's a 1916 "Who's Who in America"—before the war, that is. "S"—"S"—"Satterthwaite"—"Smalley"— *(Loudly and emphatically)* Smith! Clarence Smith! He's the very first Smith there is in it! *(Reading)* "Clarence Smith, zoologist. Born, June, 13th, 1890, at Zubesi Mission Station, Congo River, Africa— *(Looking up)* Well, I should say he *did* have cannibals! *(Reading again)* Son of Gabriel C., Medical Missionary, and Martha S., Grad. Coll. Physical Science Newcastle-on-Tyne, England. Postgrad. Polytechnique, France. D.S.C.— *(Repeating)* "D.S.C."

BOBBY. It means he's a Doctor of Science. I had a prof. was one—ole Doc. Toser!

CORA. *(Reading)* "Doctor of Science. Chief en—en—tomologist"— *(Looking up inquiringly)*

CLARENCE. *(Absently, not looking up from his letter)* Entomologist. It means somebody that studies bugs.

CORA. *(Gravely)* Bugs? How lovely! *(Reading again)* Chief ento-tomologist and curator of entomology, Sturtevant Biological Laboratories. Fellow N. Y. Acad. Sciences; mem. N. Y. Zoological Soc—society—Address Sturtevant Biological Laboratories, N. Y. *(Looking up, dazed)* Did you ever

hear anything like it? And that just means Clarence!

VIOLET. (*Huskily*) Smith! Clarence Smith!
(*Rising*)

(CLARENCE *has finished the letter and hears her. He comes to her.*)

CLARENCE. (*Slowly*) Why, you knew it was Smith, didn't you?

VIOLET. (*Still dazed, shakes her head dumbly before speaking, huskily*) No. No, I didn't.

CLARENCE. Is it—is it going to make a difference?

VIOLET. (*Groping forwards—rises*) I couldn't—I couldn't—

CLARENCE. You mean you couldn't—because it's Smith?

VIOLET. (*Just over a whisper, brokenly*) "Smith's"—beautiful!

CLARENCE. (*Gently*) Yes—it will be. (*She looks up at him.*)

CORA. (*Disturbed to MRS. WHEELER*) What are they talking about?

MRS. WHEELER. (*Smiling*) Sh! They're going to be married. (*Almost a whisper, but briskly*)

CORA. (*In a feeble voice*) What?

(BOBBY comes down.)

CLARENCE. I've got our things at the door, and I telephoned for a car. It's here.

VIOLET. (*Tremulously, pathetically*) Do you think I can go 'way with you like this—when I've just found out your name? (*She gives him her hand for an instant.*)

CLARENCE. Oh, Violet! (*He means it, profoundly, as a lover, but it has unintentionally, much the effect of CORA'S "Oh, Clarence!"*)

BOBBY. (*Approaching*) Violet— (*Gulps. She looks at him; he is unable to bear it. Speaks hastily, with a choke*) I'll go help—carry out your baggage! (*Exits hurriedly L.*)

CLARENCE. (*Heartily, shaking hands with WHEELER*) Good-bye and thank you, Mr. Wheeler!

WHEELER. (*Earnestly*) Good luck to you, Doctor Smith! (*No emphasis on "Doctor."*)

WARNING

VIOLET. (*Gasping*) Doctor—

WHEELER. Why, certainly; Doctor of Science. He's called "Doctor," of course.

CLARENCE. (*Crosses in front of VIOLET—shaking MRS. WHEELER'S hand*) You've been so kind, Mrs. Wheeler. (*Quickly going on to CORA*) Good-bye, Cora.

CORA. (*Looking straight front, her hands already behind her*) I won't. (*Speaks quickly but not loudly.*)

MRS. W. (*Quickly and cordially*) Oh, we're all coming out to see you off. (*They all move to L. except CLARENCE and CORA*) We'll say good-bye out there!

(*Exit L., taking WHEELER'S arm at the door. VIOLET runs back and kisses CORA on the cheek, hurriedly, and then runs out L. CORA is unchanged in adamantine attitude, though a very short sniff is heard from her.*)

CLARENCE. Good-bye, Cora.

CORA. I won't.

CLARENCE. Won't you say good-bye to me?

CORA. (*Unchanging*) I won't! I hate engaged men! I hate 'em, I hate 'em, I hate 'em!

CLARENCE. Won't you say good-bye to me, dear?

CORA. I won't. (*Then suddenly, but still look-*

ing straight forward) What'd Violet say if she heard you were already around callin' other women "dear"?

CLARENCE. Well—(*Moves L.*)—if you won't say good-bye I'll have to go and confess it to her! (*He looks back from the doorway*) Good-bye?

CORA. (*Not moving anything but her eyes, which follow him sidelong*) I hate 'em, I hate 'em, I hate 'em! (*CLARENCE makes a gesture of farewell and resignation; Exit L. CORA sinks into a chair L.C. just behind her, unchanged, repeating mechanically*) I hate 'em, I hate 'em, etc.

(*MRS. WHEELER enters L., smiling, but with tears in her eyes. CORA continues.*)

MRS. WHEELER. (*As she comes*) They were dears! Wasn't he lovely? Cora! Didn't you tell them good-bye? (*CLARENCE is seen outside the sun-room window up c. in bright sunshine. He raises the window. MRS. WHEELER goes up, exclaiming*) Oh, look; it's Clarence; he wants you to—

CLARENCE. (*Calling in*) Good-bye, Cora dear!

(*CORA leaps up suddenly.*)

CORA. (*In a loud, tremulous, sweet voice*) Oh, good-bye! (*She runs up, waving her handkerchief. He waves his hat, shouting "Good luck! Good-bye!" and runs off to L. outside. MRS. WHEELER goes to window, waving her handkerchief. CORA comes down, not weeping but swallowing. She sits again. Swallowing, gently*) Oh, Clarence!

CURTAIN

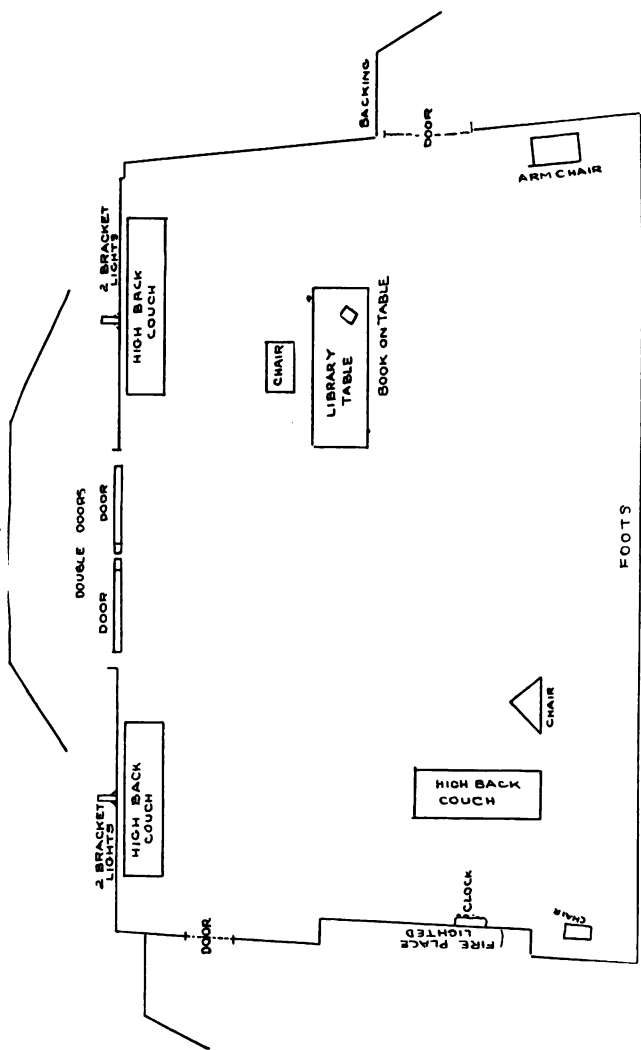
"CLARENCE"
PROPERTY PLOT

ACT I

3 high-back settees.
1 library table.
2 straight-back upholstered chairs.
1 straight-back mahogany chair.
1 mahogany clock.
1 upholstered armchair.
1 box cigars off stage L.
Note-book.
1 large engagement book.
1 pencil (Eversharp).

ACTS II, III, IV

1 piano and bench.
1 lamp
1 mahogany armchair.
1 small couch.
1 pedestal with Chinese god.
1 piano cover (black and gold).
12 sheets music (on piano).
Large couch.
1 large table behind couch.
1 writing table.
1 chair for writing table.
2 small vases.
Saxophone, off-stage R.



SCENE DESIGN
 ACT I
 CLARENCE

FOOTS

ARM CHAIR

HIGH BACK COUCH

CHAIR

LIBRARY TABLE
 BOOK ON TABLE

DOUBLE DOORS

HIGH BACK COUCH

HIGH BACK COUCH

CHAIR

CLOCK
 FIRE PLACE LIT
 CHAIR

BACKING

DOOR

DOOR

2 BRACKET LIGHTS

2 BRACKET LIGHTS

DOOR

DOOR

- 1 upholstered chair.
- 1 side table.
- 1 vase on side table.
- 1 small, straight-back chair.
- 1 vase on mantel.
- 2 small tin-painted flowers on mantel.
- Stationery in desk—blotter (blue)—Ink on stand,
pens.
- 1 brass bowl with autumn leaves.
- Fireplace.
- 1 bowl, with flowers—on piano.
- 1 ash receiver—table behind couch.
- 1 bowl cosmos—same.
- 4 newspapers.
- 1 book blocks with books.
- Magazines—"Vogue" and "Vanity Fair."
- 1 brass bowl with flowers on balustrade.
- 2 blue vases with autumn leaves—on platform.
- 1 small Chinese rug.
- 1 brown all-over carpet.
- 1 red all-over carpet.
- 4 pairs portières.
- 4 pairs curtains.
- 1 strip red carpet on platform.
- 1 carpet on stairs.
- 1 brass ash receiver.
- 5 books.
- 3 magazines.
- 2 vases on pedestal with flowers.
- 2 medallions.
- 1 box Corona cigars.
- 6 other cigars.
- 1 doorbell.
- 1 pair dish covers (tin) for cymbals.
- 1 kitchen spoon.
- 1 tin tray.
- 1 saxophone.
- 6 coffee cups.



6 saucers.
6 spoons.
Coffee pot with coffee.
Sugar bowl and creamer.
Sugar.
Spoon for sugar.
Silver tray.
1 O'Cedar mop for Della.
1 book off-stage for Cora—Act IV.
5 encyclopedias.
Automobile tools, including wrench.
Letters on tray, Act IV.
Newspaper with picture for Stem.
Letter in envelope for Clarence.
Red book for Cora on table—Act IV.
Music for Mrs. Wheeler on piano.
Newspaper for Mr. Wheeler—II-IVth Acts.
"Vogue" on couch L.—IVth Act.
Also newspapers—IVth Act.
2 empty clothing boxes tied together.
Cigar for Mr. Wheeler—Act III.
Letters and circulars on salver—Act IV—off R.
Also containing letter for Clarence.

DADDY LONG-LEGS

A charming comedy in 4 acts. By Jean Webster. The full cast calls for 6 males, 7 females and 6 orphans, but the play, by the easy doubling of some of the characters, may be played by 4 males, 4 females and 3 orphans. The orphans appear only in the first act and may be played by small girls of any age. Four easy interior scenes. Costumes modern. Plays 2½ hours.

Many readers of current fiction will recall Jean Webster's "Daddy Long-Legs." Miss Webster dramatized her story and it was presented at the Gaiety Theatre in New York, under Henry Miller's direction, with Ruth Chatterton in the principal rôle. "Daddy Long-Legs" tells the story of Judy, a pretty little drudge in a bleak New England orphanage. One day, a visiting trustee becomes interested in Judy and decides to give her a chance. She does not know the name of her benefactor, but simply calls him Daddy Long-Legs, and writes him letters brimming over with fun and affection. From the Foundling's Home she goes to a fashionable college for girls and there develops the romance that constitutes much of the play's charm. The *New York Times* reviewer, on the morning after the Broadway production, wrote the following: "If you will take your pencil and write down, one below the other, the words delightful, charming, sweet, beautiful and entertaining, and then draw a line and add them up, the answer will be 'Daddy Long-Legs.' To that result you might even add brilliant, pathetic and humorous, but the answer even then would be just what it was before—the play which Miss Jean Webster has made from her book, 'Daddy Long-Legs,' and which was presented at the Gaiety last night. To attempt to describe the simplicity and beauty of 'Daddy Long-Legs' would be like attempting to describe the first breath of Spring after an exceedingly tiresome and hard Winter." "Daddy Long-Legs" enjoyed a two-years' run in New York, and was then toured for over three years. It is now published in play form for the first time. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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